

By What Authority?

Companion B — The Reconstructed Pauline Letters

The letters as they read without the additions.

By What Authority? — The Reconstructed Pauline Letters

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About This Text

This is the reconstructed Pauline corpus — the Pauline letters of Marcion’s Apostolikon (seven undisputed plus Colossians, Ephesians/Laodiceans, and 2 Thessalonians) with the identified interpolations removed.

What is here and what is not

The text is drawn from the verse-level adjudications in Companion A. Every verse classified ATT (authentically Pauline) appears here. Every verse classified REM (removed) is absent from the text. Gaps in the verse numbering indicate where material has been removed. Verses marked PAR appear in their excised form. No bridging text has been written. No transitions have been composed. Where a retained verse begins with a strong hinge such as “therefore” or “this command,” the join may feel abrupt because the intervening material has been removed. The joins are left wherever they fall. The coherence (or incoherence) of the resulting text is a product of the original material, not of editorial smoothing.

Chapter and verse numbering

Chapter numbers follow canonical ordering throughout. Where chapters are entirely or almost entirely removed, the sequence skips — you will see Chapter 1 followed by Chapter 3, or Chapter 5 followed by Chapter 8. This is not an error. It means the intervening chapters are not present in the reconstruction. The most significant example is Romans.

Romans in this text is substantially shorter than canonical Romans. Chapters 2 and 4 are absent (the Jewish-interlocutor dialogue and the Abraham-and-circumcision argument, both identified as secondary by Walker, BeDuhn, and the structural analysis in Volume 2). Chapters 9–11 are heavily reduced: most of these verses are absent, but a small number classified as authentic — including passages within 10:1–4 and the doxology fragment at 11:33–35;

11:36 is not retained — remain. The section is the document’s most heavily edited. Chapter 13:1-7 is absent (submit to governing authorities). Chapter 15 is absent (the Spain itinerary and Jerusalem collection narrative, unattested in Marcion’s text and absent from Origen’s commentary). What remains is a letter about grace, faith, and the removal of condemnation — without the institutional overlay.

The letters in this Companion

Romans · 1 Corinthians · 2 Corinthians · Galatians · Ephesians (the letter Marcion called Laodiceans) · Philippians · Colossians · 1 Thessalonians · 2 Thessalonians · Philemon

A note on the count: “seven authentic letters” refers to the undisputed Pauline core (Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, Philemon). Colossians, Ephesians (the letter Marcion called Laodiceans), and 2 Thessalonians appear here because the adjudication in Companion A identified authentic passages within them — the letter-level attribution is disputed, but the verse-level findings are not excluded by that dispute.

The coherence of the reconstructed letters

The ten letters in this collection were written for different audiences, on different occasions, in different registers — a systematic argument (Romans), a community crisis response (1 Corinthians), a personal defence (2 Corinthians), a confrontational circular (Galatians), a cosmic meditation (Ephesians), a letter from prison to friends (Philippians), a sufficiency argument (Colossians), a pastoral reassurance (1 Thessalonians), a fragmentary correction (2 Thessalonians), a private appeal for one person (Philemon). What they do not share, in the canonical text, is a consistent position: the canonical Paul submits to authorities, upholds household hierarchy, validates the law, and grounds Gentile inclusion in Abrahamic covenant continuity — and also declares freedom from the law, abolishes every hierarchy, and insists on grace without condition.

When the passages identified in Companion A as secondary are removed, that tension resolves. What remains across all ten letters is consistent: grace without condition, freedom without law, dignity without household hierarchy, reconciliation without institutional mediation. Letters that argue this directly (Romans, Galatians), letters that apply it to community conflict (1 Corinthians, Colossians), letters that live it personally (Philippians, Phile-

mon), and letters that assume it pastorally (1 Thessalonians) all point the same direction. The coherence is not manufactured by the reconstruction. It is what remains when the editing programme is reversed.

This is offered as an observation, not a proof. The reader is invited to read the letters in sequence and assess whether the consistency holds. Companion A carries the full evidence for every removal; this text carries the result.

Translation

World English Bible (WEB) throughout, with minor textual adjustments where the adjudication identified a specific variant. Every adjustment is noted in Companion A's entry for the relevant verse.

For the evidence

Every gap in this text has a full entry in Companion A. If a chapter is absent, or a passage ends abruptly and resumes several verses later, the relevant Companion A entry carries the signal codes, the confidence scores, the manuscript evidence, and the scholarly case. The gaps are not arbitrary. They are the argument.

Reading the text

Most verses appear without any marker. A verse labelled **SUS** in the left margin is retained in the text but has raised a concern in Companion A — a directional signal, a stylistic anomaly, or partial manuscript evidence. It is not removed, but the flag means the case for it is not clean. Gaps in verse numbering show where material has been removed. A chapter number skip (Chapter 1 followed by Chapter 3) means the intervening chapter contained no retained verses.

This text is a reconstruction output, not a recovered Pauline corpus. It is the strongest reading this apparatus can currently produce, provisional in proportion to the evidence limits documented in Companion A.

ROMANS

In this reconstruction, Romans is a letter about the unconditional release of humanity from judgment — a release that requires no law-keeping, no covenant lineage, and no institutional mediation. What remains after reconstruction is the argument stripped of its institutional overlay: chapters 2, 4, 7, and 15 are absent; the wrath-and-vice catalogue of 1:18–2:12, the Abraham-circumcision argument, the ‘I do what I don’t want to do’ passage, and the Spain itinerary are not here. Chapters 9–11 — the Israel-election argument, the olive tree allegory, the theological architecture of Jewish covenantal history — are also largely absent: of ninety verses in those three chapters, only Paul’s opening statement of anguish for his people (9:1–3), his acknowledgment of their zeal without knowledge (10:1–4), and the closing doxology (11:33–35) remain. What is here is the case for grace — sustained from the opening calling through the freedom of chapter 8 and the ‘no condemnation’ declaration — without the qualifications that later made it compatible with institutional Christianity. The letter that remains is shorter, cleaner, and argues harder in one direction.

The argument runs like this: God’s right-standing is available to everyone — Jew and Gentile alike — through faith, not law-observance. The letter builds from the universal need (chapter 3: ‘all have sinned’) through justification by faith, to freedom from sin’s dominion (chapters 5–6), to life in the Spirit and its famous climax (chapter 8: ‘nothing can separate us from the love of God’), to the reconstituted community (chapters 12–14: receive one another as Christ received you). In this reconstruction those peaks stand without the qualifications that surrounded them. The case Paul builds ends with every wall down.

Chapter 1

- PAR 1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the Good News of God,
- 5 through whom we received grace and apostleship, for obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name's sake;
- 6 among whom you are also called to belong to Jesus Christ;
- 7 to all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world.
- 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the Good News of his Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,
- 10 requesting, if by any means now at last I may be prospered by the will of God to come to you.
- 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, to the end that you may be established;
- 12 that is, that I with you may be encouraged in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.
- 13 Now I don't desire to have you unaware, brothers, that I often planned to come to you, and was hindered so far, that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.
- 14 I am debtor both to Greeks and to foreigners, both to the wise and to the foolish.
- 15 So, as much as is in me, I am eager to preach the Good News to you also who are in Rome.
- PAR 16 For I am not ashamed of the Good News of Christ, because it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes; for both Jew and Greek.
- 17 For in it is revealed God's righteousness from faith to faith. As it is written, "But the righteous shall live by faith."

Chapter 3

- PAR 21 But now apart from the law, a righteousness of God has been revealed;
- PAR 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all those who believe. For there is no distinction,

- 27 Where then is the boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.
- 28 We maintain therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.
- 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Isn't he the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,
- 30 since indeed there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith, and the uncircumcised through faith.

Chapter 5

- 1 Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;
- 2 through whom we also have our access by faith into this grace in which we stand. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
- 3 Not only this, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces perseverance;
- 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope:
- 5 and hope doesn't disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
- 6 For while we were yet weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.
- 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man. Yet perhaps for a righteous person someone would even dare to die.
- 8 But God commends his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we will be saved from God's wrath through him.
- 10 For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we will be saved by his life.
- 11 Not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.
- 12 Therefore as sin entered into the world through one man, and death through sin; and so death passed to all men, because all sinned.
- 13 For until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not charged when there is no law.
- 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those whose sins weren't like Adam's disobedience, who is a foreshadowing of him who was to come.

- 15 But the free gift isn't like the trespass. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.
- 16 The gift is not as through one who sinned: for the judgment came by one to condemnation, but the free gift came of many trespasses to justification.
- 17 For if by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; so much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ.
- 18 So then as through one trespass, all men were condemned; even so through one act of righteousness, all men were justified to life.
- 19 For as through the one man's disobedience many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one, many will be made righteous.
- 20 The law came in besides, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace abounded more exceedingly;
- 21 that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Chapter 6

- 1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?
- 2 May it never be! We who died to sin, how could we live in it any longer?
- 3 Or don't you know that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?
- 4 We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.
- 5 For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we will also be part of his resurrection;
- 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be in bondage to sin.
- 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.
- 8 But if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him;
- 9 knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no more has dominion over him!
- 10 For the death that he died, he died to sin one time; but the life that he lives, he lives to God.

- 11 Thus consider yourselves also to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- 12 Therefore don't let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.
- 13 Also, do not present your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.
- 14 For sin will not have dominion over you. For you are not under law, but under grace.
- 15 What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? May it never be!
- 17 But thanks be to God, that, whereas you were bondservants of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were delivered.
- 18 Being made free from sin, you became bondservants of righteousness.
- 19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh, for as you presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to wickedness upon wickedness, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness for sanctification.
- 20 For when you were servants of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.
- 21 What fruit then did you have at that time in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.
- 22 But now, being made free from sin, and having become servants of God, you have your fruit of sanctification, and the result of eternal life.
- 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Chapter 8

Chapter 7 is absent in this reconstruction. The "therefore" in 8:1 is retained as part of the transmitted verse, but the join now follows the retained argument of chapters 5–6.

- 1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who don't walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.
- 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.
- 3 For what the law couldn't do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh;
- 4 that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
- 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

- 6 For the mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace;
- 7 because the mind of the flesh is hostile towards God; for it is not subject to God's law, neither indeed can it be.
- 8 Those who are in the flesh can't please God.
- 9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if it is so that the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if any man doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, he is not his.
- 10 If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is alive because of righteousness.
- 11 But if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised up Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.
- 12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.
- 13 For if you live after the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.
- 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are children of God.
- 15 For you didn't receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"
- 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God;
- 17 and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if indeed we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him.
- 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which will be revealed toward us.
- SUS 19 For the creation waits with eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.
- SUS 20 For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but because of him who subjected it, in hope
- SUS 21 that the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of decay into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.
- SUS 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now.
- SUS 23 Not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for adoption, the redemption of our body.
- 24 For we were saved in hope, but hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for that which he sees?
- 25 But if we hope for that which we don't see, we wait for it with patience.
- 26 In the same way, the Spirit also helps our weaknesses, for we don't know how to pray as we ought. But the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings which can't be uttered.

- 27 He who searches the hearts knows what is on the Spirit's mind, because he makes intercession for the saints according to God.
- 28 We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.
- 29 For whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.
- 30 Whom he predestined, those he also called. Whom he called, those he also justified. Whom he justified, those he also glorified.
- 31 What then shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?
- 32 He who didn't spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how would he not also with him freely give us all things?
- 33 Who could bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who justifies.
- 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, yes rather, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.
- 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Could oppression, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
- 36 Even as it is written, "For your sake we are killed all day long. We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter."
- 37 No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
- 38 For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,
- 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from God's love, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Chapter 9

- 1 I tell the truth in Christ. I am not lying, my conscience testifying with me in the Holy Spirit,
- 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart.
- 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brothers' sake, my relatives according to the flesh,

Chapter 10

- 1 Brothers, my heart's desire and my prayer to God is for Israel, that they may be saved.

2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

3 For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they didn't subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

4 For Christ is the fulfillment of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

'Fulfillment' translates τέλος (τέλος γάρ νόμου Χριστός) — a Greek word that carries both the sense of goal (what something was aimed at) and termination (where something ends). On the transaction/grace reading developed in Volume 2, τέλος is read as termination: Christ is the point at which the law's jurisdiction stops, consistent with Romans 6:14 ('you are not under law but under grace') and Galatians 3:13 ('Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law'). The verses immediately following this one (10:5–21), which ground faith-righteousness in Deuteronomy and present the law as prophetically pointing to Christ, are not present in Marcion's text and are removed in this reconstruction. Without them this verse stands as a clean statement: the law is over. Christ is where it ended. The word 'fulfillment' in this English rendering reflects the translator's theological judgment, not a uniquely available reading of the Greek.

Chapter 11

33 Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!

34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"

35 "Or who has first given to him, and it will be repaid to him again?"

Chapter 12

Most of Romans 9–11 is absent or fragmentary in this reconstruction. The "therefore" in 12:1 is retained as part of the verse, but the immediate canonical bridge has been largely removed.

1 Therefore I urge you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service.

2 Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what is the good, well-pleasing, and perfect will of God.

3 For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think reasonably, as God has apportioned to each person a measure of faith.

4 For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members don't have the same function,

5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

- 6 Having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, if prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith;
- 7 or service, let us give ourselves to service; or he who teaches, to his teaching;
- 8 or he who exhorts, to his exhorting: he who gives, let him do it with generosity; he who rules, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.
- 9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil. Cling to that which is good.
- 10 In love of the brothers be tenderly affectionate to one another; in honor preferring one another;
- 11 not lagging in diligence; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;
- 12 rejoicing in hope; enduring in troubles; continuing steadfastly in prayer;
- 13 contributing to the needs of the saints; given to hospitality.
- 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless, and don't curse.
- 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice. Weep with those who weep.
- 16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Don't set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Don't be wise in your own conceits.
- 17 Repay no one evil for evil. Respect what is honorable in the sight of all men.
- 18 If it is possible, as much as it is up to you, be at peace with all men.
- 19 Don't seek revenge yourselves, beloved, but give place to God's wrath. For it is written, "Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, says the Lord."
- 20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing so, you will heap coals of fire on his head."
- 21 Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Chapter 13

- 8 Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.
- 9 For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other commandments there are, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
- 10 Love doesn't harm a neighbor. Love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.
- 11 Do this, knowing the time, that it is already time for you to awaken out of sleep, for salvation is now nearer to us than when we first believed.

- 12 The night is far gone, and the day is near. Let's therefore throw off the deeds of darkness, and let's put on the armor of light.
- 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day; not in reveling and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and lustful acts, and not in strife and jealousy.
- 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, for its lusts.

Chapter 14

- 1 Now accept one who is weak in faith, but not for disputes over opinions.
- 2 One man has faith to eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.
- 3 Don't let him who eats despise him who doesn't eat. Don't let him who doesn't eat judge him who eats, for God has accepted him.
- 4 Who are you who judge another's servant? To his own lord he stands or falls. Yes, he will be made to stand, for God has power to make him stand.
- 5 One man esteems one day as more important. Another esteems every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind.
- 6 He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks. He who doesn't eat, to the Lord he doesn't eat, and gives God thanks.
- 7 For none of us lives to himself, and none dies to himself.
- 8 For if we live, we live to the Lord. Or if we die, we die to the Lord. If therefore we live or die, we are the Lord's.
- 9 For to this end Christ died, rose, and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.
- 10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.
- 11 For it is written, "As I live," says the Lord, "to me every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess to God."
- 12 So then each one of us will give account of himself to God.
- 13 Therefore let's not judge one another any more, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way, or an occasion for falling.
- 14 I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself; except that to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.
- 15 Yet if because of food your brother is grieved, you walk no longer in love. Don't destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.
- 16 Then don't let your good be slandered,

- 17 for God's Kingdom is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- 18 For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.
- 19 So then, let us follow after things which make for peace, and things by which we may build one another up.
- 20 Don't overthrow God's work for food's sake. All things indeed are clean, however it is evil for that man who creates a stumbling block by eating.
- 21 It is good to not eat meat, drink wine, nor do anything by which your brother stumbles, is offended, or is made weak.
- 22 Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who doesn't judge himself in that which he approves.
- 23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because it isn't of faith; and whatever is not of faith is sin.

Chapter 16

- 1 I commend to you Phoebe, our sister, who is a servant of the assembly that is at Cenchreae,
- 2 that you receive her in the Lord, in a way worthy of the saints, and that you assist her in whatever matter she may need from you, for she herself also has been a helper of many, and of my own self.
- 3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,
- 4 who for my life, laid down their own necks; to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the assemblies of the Gentiles.
- 5 Greet the assembly that is in their house. Greet Epänetus, my beloved, who is the first fruits of Achaia to Christ.
- 6 Greet Mary, who labored much for us.
- 7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives and my fellow prisoners, who are notable among the apostles, who were also in Christ before me.
- 8 Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord.
- 9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved.
- 10 Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.
- 11 Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet them of the household of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.

12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Greet Persis, the beloved, who labored much in the Lord.

13 Greet Rufus, the chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them.

15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. The assemblies of Christ greet you.

SUS **17** Now I beg you, brothers, look out for those who are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and turn away from them.

SUS **18** For those who are such don't serve our Lord, Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and flattering speech, they deceive the hearts of the innocent.

SUS **19** For your obedience has become known to all. I rejoice therefore over you. But I desire to have you wise in that which is good, but innocent in that which is evil.

SUS **20** And the God of peace will quickly crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

21 Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you, as do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my relatives.

22 I, Tertius, who write the letter, greet you in the Lord.

23 Gaius, my host and host of the whole assembly, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, as does Quartus, the brother.

1 CORINTHIANS

In this reconstruction, 1 Corinthians is the most complete of the reconstructed letters — 96% of it survives intact. What has been removed is targeted and precise: the head-coverings digression (11:2–16), identified by Walker’s stylistic analysis as secondary; the instruction for women to be silent in the assemblies (14:34–35), absent from Marcion’s text and displaced in a significant manuscript family; and 15:58, the closing exhortation to steadfastness, which circulated independently as a conduct formula. The love hymn of chapter 13, the body-of-Christ argument of chapter 12, the resurrection case of chapter 15 — all of it is here. What is gone is the two passages that established gender hierarchy in Christian assembly, and the closing exhortation appended to the resurrection argument. Their removal does not require reconstruction of the argument; the surrounding text reads more cleanly without them.

The Corinthian community is fracturing along every axis — leadership allegiances, lawsuits, sexual ethics, idol food, spiritual gifts — and Paul’s argument is that these are all forms of the same error: dividing what Christ has made one. The letter moves from the folly of factions (chapters 1–4) through a series of ethical cases (5–10) to the shape of communal assembly (chapters 11–14) and finally to the resurrection (chapter 15), the argument on which everything else depends. The love hymn at chapter 13 is the pivot: not a poem about sentiment but a standard against which every faction claim and every gift competition is measured. The letter is Paul at his most pastoral and his most insistent: the community is a body, and a body cannot war against itself.

Chapter 1

1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

- 2 to the assembly of God which is at Corinth; those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, both theirs and ours:
- 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 4 I always thank my God concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus;
- 5 that in everything you were enriched in him, in all speech and all knowledge;
- 6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:
- 7 so that you come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ;
- 8 who will also confirm you until the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- 10 Now I beg you, brothers, through the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment.
- 11 For it has been reported to me concerning you, my brothers, by those who are from Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you.
- 12 Now I mean this, that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," "I follow Apollos," "I follow Cephas," and, "I follow Christ."
- 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?
- 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, except Crispus and Gaius,
- 15 so that no one should say that I had baptized you into my own name.
- 16 (I also baptized the household of Stephanas; besides them, I don't know whether I baptized any other.)
- 17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Good News—not in wisdom of words, so that the cross of Christ wouldn't be made void.
- 18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are dying, but to us who are saved it is the power of God.
- 19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, I will bring the discernment of the discerning to nothing."
- 20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the lawyer of this world? Hasn't God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

- 21 For seeing that in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom didn't know God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save those who believe.
- 22 For Jews ask for signs, Greeks seek after wisdom,
- 23 but we preach Christ crucified; a stumbling block to Jews, and foolishness to Greeks,
- 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.
- 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.
- 26 For you see your calling, brothers, that not many are wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, and not many noble;
- 27 but God chose the foolish things of the world that he might put to shame those who are wise. God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong;
- 28 and God chose the lowly things of the world, and the things that are despised, and the things that are not, that he might bring to nothing the things that are:
- 29 that no flesh should boast before God.
- 30 Because of him, you are in Christ Jesus, who was made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption:
- 31 that, according as it is written, "He who boasts, let him boast in the Lord."

Chapter 2

- 1 When I came to you, brothers, I didn't come with excellence of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.
- 2 For I determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.
- 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.
- 4 My speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,
- 5 that your faith wouldn't stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.
- 6 We speak wisdom, however, among those who are full grown; yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nothing.
- 7 But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the wisdom that has been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds for our glory,

- 8 which none of the rulers of this world has known. For had they known it, they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of glory.
- 9 But as it is written, "Things which an eye didn't see, and an ear didn't hear, which didn't enter into the heart of man, these God has prepared for those who love him."
- 10 But to us, God revealed them through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.
- 11 For who among men knows the things of a man, except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so, no one knows the things of God, except God's Spirit.
- 12 But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might know the things that were freely given to us by God.
- 13 Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual things.
- 14 Now the natural man doesn't receive the things of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to him, and he can't know them, because they are spiritually discerned.
- 15 But he who is spiritual discerns all things, and he himself is judged by no one.
- 16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him?" But we have Christ's mind.

Chapter 3

- 1 Brothers, I couldn't speak to you as to spiritual, but as to fleshly, as to babies in Christ.
- 2 I fed you with milk, not with meat; for you weren't yet ready. Indeed, not even now are you ready,
- 3 for you are still fleshly. For insofar as there is jealousy, strife, and factions among you, aren't you fleshly, and don't you walk in the ways of men?
- 4 For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," aren't you fleshly?
- 5 Who then is Apollos, and who is Paul, but servants through whom you believed; and each as the Lord gave to him?
- 6 I planted. Apollos watered. But God gave the increase.
- 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.
- 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are the same, but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.
- 9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's farming, God's building.

- 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another builds on it. But let each man be careful how he builds on it.
- 11 For no one can lay any other foundation than that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- 12 But if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or stubble;
- 13 each man's work will be revealed. For the Day will declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself will test what sort of work each man's work is.
- 14 If any man's work remains which he built on it, he will receive a reward.
- 15 If any man's work is burned, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, but as through fire.
- 16 Don't you know that you are a temple of God, and that God's Spirit lives in you?
- 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is holy, which you are.
- 18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone thinks that he is wise among you in this world, let him become a fool, that he may become wise.
- 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He has taken the wise in their craftiness."
- 20 And again, "The Lord knows the reasoning of the wise, that it is worthless."
- 21 Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours,
- 22 whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come. All are yours,
- 23 and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Chapter 4

- 1 So let a man think of us as Christ's servants, and stewards of God's mysteries.
- 2 Here, moreover, it is required of stewards, that they be found faithful.
- 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you, or by man's judgment. Yes, I don't judge my own self.
- 4 For I know nothing against myself. Yet I am not justified by this, but he who judges me is the Lord.
- 5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each man will get his praise from God.

- 6 Now these things, brothers, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that in us you might learn not to think beyond the things which are written, that none of you be puffed up against one another.
- 7 For who makes you different? And what do you have that you didn't receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?
- 8 You are already filled. You have already become rich. You have come to reign without us. Yes, and I wish that you did reign, that we also might reign with you.
- 9 For, I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last of all, like men sentenced to death. For we are made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and men.
- 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You have honor, but we have dishonor.
- 11 Even to this present hour we hunger, thirst, are naked, are beaten, and have no certain dwelling place.
- 12 We toil, working with our own hands. When people curse us, we bless. Being persecuted, we endure.
- 13 Being defamed, we entreat. We are made as the filth of the world, the dirt wiped off by all, even until now.
- 14 I don't write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children.
- 15 For though you have ten thousand tutors in Christ, you don't have many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, I became your father through the Good News.
- 16 I beg you therefore, be imitators of me.
- 17 Because of this I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every assembly.
- 18 Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you.
- 19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord is willing. And I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power.
- 20 For God's Kingdom is not in word, but in power.
- 21 What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

Chapter 5

- 1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles, that one has his father's wife.
- 2 You are puffed up, and didn't rather mourn, that he who had done this deed might be removed from among you.

- 3 For I most certainly, as being absent in body but present in spirit, have already, as though I were present, judged him who has done this thing.
- 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, you being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 5 are to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.
- 6 Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole lump?
- 7 Purge out the old yeast, that you may be a new lump, even as you are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed in our place.
- 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old yeast, neither with the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.
- 9 I wrote to you in my letter to have no company with sexual sinners;
- 10 yet not at all meaning with the sexual sinners of this world, or with the covetous and extortionists, or with idolaters; for then you would have to leave the world.
- 11 But as it is, I wrote to you not to associate with anyone who is called a brother who is a sexual sinner, or covetous, or an idolater, or a slanderer, or a drunkard, or an extortionist. Don't even eat with such a person.
- 12 For what do I have to do with also judging those who are outside? Don't you judge those who are within?
- 13 But those who are outside, God judges. "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves."

Chapter 6

- 1 Dare any of you, having a matter against his neighbor, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?
- 2 Don't you know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?
- 3 Don't you know that we will judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?
- 4 If then, you have to judge things pertaining to this life, do you set them to judge who are of no account in the assembly?
- 5 I say this to move you to shame. Isn't there even one wise man among you who would be able to decide between his brothers?
- 6 But brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers!

- 7 Therefore it is already altogether a defect in you, that you have lawsuits one with another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?
- 8 No, but you yourselves do wrong, and defraud, and that against your brothers.
- 9 Or don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God's Kingdom? Don't be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexuals,
- 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor extortionists, will inherit God's Kingdom.
- 11 Such were some of you, but you were washed. But you were sanctified. But you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God.
- 12 "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are expedient. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be brought under the power of anything.
- 13 "Foods for the belly, and the belly for foods," but God will bring to nothing both it and them. But the body is not for sexual immorality, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.
- 14 Now God raised up the Lord, and will also raise us up by his power.
- 15 Don't you know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be!
- 16 Or don't you know that he who is joined to a prostitute is one body? For, "The two," says he, "will become one flesh."
- 17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
- 18 Flee sexual immorality! "Every sin that a man does is outside the body," but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.
- 19 Or don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,
- 20 for you were bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Chapter 7

- 1 Now concerning the things about which you wrote to me: it is good for a man not to touch a woman.
- 2 But, because of sexual immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.
- 3 Let the husband give his wife the affection owed her, and likewise also the wife her husband.

- 4 The wife doesn't have authority over her own body, but the husband. Likewise also the husband doesn't have authority over his own body, but the wife.
- 5 Don't deprive one another, unless it is by consent for a season, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer, and may be together again, that Satan doesn't tempt you because of your lack of self-control.
- 6 But this I say by way of concession, not of commandment.
- 7 Yet I wish that all men were like me. However each man has his own gift from God, one of this kind, and another of that kind.
- 8 But I say to the unmarried and to widows, it is good for them if they remain even as I am.
- 9 But if they don't have self-control, let them marry. For it's better to marry than to burn.
- 10 But to the married I command—not I, but the Lord—that the wife not leave her husband
- 11 (but if she departs, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband not leave his wife.
- 12 But to the rest I—not the Lord—say, if any brother has an unbelieving wife, and she is content to live with him, let him not leave her.
- 13 The woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he is content to live with her, let her not leave her husband.
- 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.
- 15 Yet if the unbeliever departs, let there be separation. The brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us in peace.
- 16 For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?
- 17 Only, as the Lord has distributed to each man, as God has called each, so let him walk. So I command in all the assemblies.
- 18 Was anyone called having been circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised.
- 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.
- 20 Let each man stay in that calling in which he was called.
- 21 Were you called being a bondservant? Don't let that bother you, but if you get an opportunity to become free, use it.
- 22 For he who was called in the Lord being a bondservant is the Lord's free man. Likewise he who was called being free is Christ's bondservant.

- 23 You were bought with a price. Don't become bondservants of men.
- 24 Brothers, let each man, in whatever condition he was called, stay in that condition with God.
- 25 Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who has obtained mercy from the Lord to be trustworthy.
- 26 Therefore I think that because of the distress that is on us, that it's good for a man to remain as he is.
- 27 Are you bound to a wife? Don't seek to be freed. Are you free from a wife? Don't seek a wife.
- 28 But if you marry, you have not sinned. If a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet such will have oppression in the flesh, and I want to spare you.
- 29 But I say this, brothers: the time is short, that from now on, both those who have wives may be as though they had none;
- 30 and those who weep, as though they didn't weep; and those who rejoice, as though they didn't rejoice; and those who buy, as though they didn't possess;
- 31 and those who use the world, as not using it to the fullest. For the mode of this world passes away.
- 32 But I desire to have you to be free from cares. He who is unmarried is concerned for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord;
- 33 but he who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife.
- 34 There is also a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world—how she may please her husband.
- 35 This I say for your own profit; not that I may ensnare you, but for that which is appropriate, and that you may attend to the Lord without distraction.
- 36 But if any man thinks that he is behaving inappropriately toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of her age, and if need so requires, let him do what he desires. He doesn't sin. Let them marry.
- 37 But he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no urgency, but has power over his own will, and has determined in his own heart to keep his own virgin, does well.
- 38 So then both he who gives his own virgin in marriage does well, and he who doesn't give her in marriage does better.
- 39 A wife is bound by law for as long as her husband lives; but if the husband is dead, she is free to be married to whomever she desires, only in the Lord.
- 40 But she is happier if she stays as she is, in my judgment, and I think that I also have God's Spirit.

Chapter 8

- 1 Now concerning things sacrificed to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.
- 2 But if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he doesn't yet know as he ought to know.
- 3 But if anyone loves God, the same is known by him.
- 4 Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no other God but one.
- 5 For though there are things that are called "gods", whether in the heavens or on earth; as there are many "gods" and many "lords";
- 6 yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we live through him.
- 7 However, that knowledge isn't in all men. But some, with consciousness of the idol until now, eat as of a thing sacrificed to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.
- 8 But food will not commend us to God. For neither, if we don't eat, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better.
- 9 But be careful that by no means does this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to the weak.
- 10 For if a man sees you who have knowledge sitting in an idol's temple, won't his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols?
- 11 And through your knowledge, he who is weak perishes, the brother for whose sake Christ died.
- 12 Thus, sinning against the brothers, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.
- 13 Therefore if food causes my brother to stumble, I will eat no meat forever more, that I don't cause my brother to stumble.

Chapter 9

- 1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Haven't I seen Jesus Christ, our Lord? Aren't you my work in the Lord?
- 2 If to others I am not an apostle, yet at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.
- 3 My defense to those who examine me is this.

- 4 Have we no right to eat and to drink?
- 5 Have we no right to take along a wife who is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?
- 6 Or have only Barnabas and I no right to not work?
- 7 What soldier ever serves at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard, and doesn't eat of its fruit? Or who feeds a flock, and doesn't drink from the flock's milk?
- 8 Do I speak these things according to the ways of men? Or doesn't the law also say the same thing?
- 9 For it is written "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it for the oxen that God cares
- 10 or does he say it assuredly for our sake? Yes, it was written for our sake, because he who plows ought to plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should partake of his hope.
- 11 If we sowed to you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your fleshly things?
- 12 If others partake of this right over you, don't we yet more? Nevertheless we did not use this right, but we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the Good News of Christ.
- 13 Don't you know that those who serve around sacred things eat from the things of the temple, and those who wait on the altar have their portion with the altar?
- 14 Even so the Lord ordained that those who proclaim the Good News should live from the Good News.
- 15 But I have used none of these things, and I don't write these things that it may be done so in my case; for I would rather die, than that anyone should make my boasting void.
- 16 For if I preach the Good News, I have nothing to boast about; for necessity is laid on me; but woe is to me, if I don't preach the Good News.
- 17 For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward. But if not of my own will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.
- 18 What then is my reward? That, when I preach the Good News, I may present the Good News of Christ without charge, so as not to abuse my authority in the Good News.
- 19 For though I was free from all, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more.
- 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain those who are under the law;
- 21 to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law.

- 22 To the weak I became as weak, that I might gain the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some.
- 23 Now I do this for the sake of the Good News, that I may be a joint partaker of it.
- 24 Don't you know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run like that, that you may win.
- 25 Every man who strives in the games exercises self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.
- 26 I therefore run like that, not aimlessly. I fight like that, not beating the air,
- 27 but I beat my body and bring it into submission, lest by any means, after I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.

Chapter 10

- SUS 1 Now I would not have you ignorant, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;
- SUS 2 and were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;
- SUS 3 and all ate the same spiritual food;
- SUS 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.
- SUS 5 However with most of them, God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.
- SUS 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.
- SUS 7 Don't be idolaters, as some of them were. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."
- SUS 8 Let us not commit sexual immorality, as some of them committed, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell.
- SUS 9 Let us not test Christ, as some of them tested, and perished by the serpents.
- SUS 10 Don't grumble, as some of them also grumbled, and perished by the destroyer.
- SUS 11 Now all these things happened to them by way of example, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.
- SUS 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands be careful that he doesn't fall.
- SUS 13 No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.
- 14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

15 I speak as to wise men. Judge what I say.

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, isn't it a sharing of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, isn't it a sharing of the body of Christ?

17 Because there is one loaf of bread, we, who are many, are one body; for we all partake of the one loaf of bread.

SUS 18 Consider Israel according to the flesh. Don't those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar?

19 What am I saying then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?

20 But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God, and I don't desire that you would have fellowship with demons.

21 You can't both drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You can't both partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of demons.

22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

23 "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are profitable. "All things are lawful for me," but not all things build up.

24 Let no one seek his own, but each one his neighbor's good.

25 Whatever is sold in the butcher shop, eat, asking no question for the sake of conscience,

SUS 26 for "the earth is the Lord's, and its fullness."

27 But if one of those who don't believe invites you to a meal, and you are inclined to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no questions for the sake of conscience.

SUS 28 But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," don't eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for the sake of conscience. For "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness."

29 Conscience, I say, not your own, but the other's conscience. For why is my liberty judged by another conscience?

30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced for something I give thanks for?

31 Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

32 Give no occasion for stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the assembly of God;

33 even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved.

Chapter 11

1 Be imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ.

Verses 2–16 are absent in this reconstruction. The phrase “this command” in 11:17 is retained from the transmitted verse, but its immediate antecedent is no longer present.

- 17 But in giving you this command, I don’t praise you, that you come together not for the better but for the worse.
- 18 For first of all, when you come together in the assembly, I hear that divisions exist among you, and I partly believe it.
- 19 For there also must be factions among you, that those who are approved may be revealed among you.
- 20 When therefore you assemble yourselves together, it is not the Lord’s supper that you eat.
- 21 For in your eating each one takes his own supper first. One is hungry, and another is drunken.
- 22 What, don’t you have houses to eat and to drink in? Or do you despise God’s assembly, and put them to shame who don’t have enough? What shall I tell you? Shall I praise you? In this I don’t praise you.
- 23 For I received from the Lord that which also I delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed took bread.
- 24 When he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “Take, eat. This is my body, which is broken for you. Do this in memory of me.”
- 25 In the same way he also took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink, in memory of me.”
- 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.
- 27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks the Lord’s cup in a way unworthy of the Lord will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.
- 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.
- 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy way eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he doesn’t discern the Lord’s body.
- 30 For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep.
- 31 For if we discerned ourselves, we wouldn’t be judged.
- 32 But when we are judged, we are punished by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.
- 33 Therefore, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

- 34 But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest your coming together be for judgment. The rest I will set in order whenever I come.

Chapter 12

- 1 Now concerning spiritual things, brothers, I don't want you to be ignorant.
- 2 You know that when you were heathen, you were led away to those mute idols, however you might be led.
- 3 Therefore I make known to you that no man speaking by God's Spirit says, "Jesus is accursed." No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," but by the Holy Spirit.
- 4 Now there are various kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.
- 5 There are various kinds of service, and the same Lord.
- 6 There are various kinds of workings, but the same God, who works all things in all.
- 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the profit of all.
- 8 For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom, and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit;
- 9 to another faith, by the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings, by the same Spirit;
- 10 and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discerning of spirits; to another different kinds of languages; and to another the interpretation of languages.
- 11 But the one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing to each one separately as he desires.
- 12 For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.
- 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all given to drink into one Spirit.
- 14 For the body is not one member, but many.
- 15 If the foot would say, "Because I'm not the hand, I'm not part of the body," it is not therefore not part of the body.
- 16 If the ear would say, "Because I'm not the eye, I'm not part of the body," it's not therefore not part of the body.
- 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the smelling be?
- 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body, just as he desired.
- 19 If they were all one member, where would the body be?

- 20 But now they are many members, but one body.
- 21 The eye can't tell the hand, "I have no need for you," or again the head to the feet, "I have no need for you."
- 22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.
- 23 Those parts of the body which we think to be less honorable, on those we bestow more abundant honor; and our unpresentable parts have more abundant propriety;
- 24 whereas our presentable parts have no such need. But God composed the body together, giving more abundant honor to the inferior part,
- 25 that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.
- 26 When one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. Or when one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.
- 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
- 28 God has set some in the assembly: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracle workers, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, and various kinds of languages.
- 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all miracle workers?
- 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with various languages? Do all interpret?
- 31 But earnestly desire the best gifts. Moreover, I show a most excellent way to you.

Chapter 13

- 1 If I speak with the languages of men and of angels, but don't have love, I have become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal.
- 2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but don't have love, I am nothing.
- SUS 3 If I give away all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but don't have love, it profits me nothing.
- SUS 4 Love is patient and is kind; love doesn't envy. Love doesn't brag, is not proud,
- SUS 5 doesn't behave itself inappropriately, doesn't seek its own way, is not provoked, takes no account of evil;
- SUS 6 doesn't rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
- SUS 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
- SUS 8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will be done away with. Where there are various languages, they will cease. Where there is knowledge, it will be done away with.

- SUS 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part;
- SUS 10 but when that which is complete has come, then that which is partial will be done away with.
- SUS 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child. Now that I have become a man, I have put away childish things.
- SUS 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, even as I was also fully known.
- SUS 13 But now faith, hope, and love remain—these three. The greatest of these is love.

Chapter 14

- 1 Follow after love, and earnestly desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.
- 2 For he who speaks in another language speaks not to men, but to God; for no one understands; but in the Spirit he speaks mysteries.
- 3 But he who prophesies speaks to men for their edification, exhortation, and consolation.
- 4 He who speaks in another language edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the assembly.
- 5 Now I desire to have you all speak with other languages, but rather that you would prophesy. For he is greater who prophesies than he who speaks with other languages, unless he interprets, that the assembly may be built up.
- 6 But now, brothers, if I come to you speaking with other languages, what would I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation, or of knowledge, or of prophesying, or of teaching?
- 7 Even things without life, giving a voice, whether pipe or harp, if they didn't give a distinction in the sounds, how would it be known what is piped or harped?
- 8 For if the trumpet gave an uncertain sound, who would prepare himself for war?
- 9 So also you, unless you uttered by the tongue words easy to understand, how would it be known what is spoken? For you would be speaking into the air.
- 10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of sounds in the world, and none of them is without meaning.
- 11 If then I don't know the meaning of the sound, I would be to him who speaks a foreigner, and he who speaks would be a foreigner to me.
- 12 So also you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, seek that you may abound to the building up of the assembly.
- 13 Therefore let him who speaks in another language pray that he may interpret.

- 14 For if I pray in another language, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.
- 15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also. I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.
- 16 Otherwise if you bless with the spirit, how will he who fills the place of the unlearned say the “Amen” at your giving of thanks, seeing he doesn’t know what you say?
- 17 For you most certainly give thanks well, but the other person is not built up.
- 18 I thank my God, I speak with other languages more than you all.
- 19 However in the assembly I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in another language.
- 20 Brothers, don’t be children in thoughts, yet in malice be babies, but in thoughts be mature.
- SUS 21 In the law it is written, “By men of strange languages and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people. Not even thus will they hear me, says the Lord.”
- 22 Therefore other languages are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to the unbelieving; but prophesying is for a sign, not to the unbelieving, but to those who believe.
- 23 If therefore the whole assembly is assembled together and all speak with other languages, and unlearned or unbelieving people come in, won’t they say that you are crazy?
- 24 But if all prophesy, and someone unbelieving or unlearned comes in, he is reproved by all, and he is judged by all.
- 25 And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed. So he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed.
- 26 What is it then, brothers? When you come together, each one of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has another language, has an interpretation. Let all things be done to build each other up.
- 27 If any man speaks in another language, let it be two, or at the most three, and in turn; and let one interpret.
- 28 But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the assembly, and let him speak to himself, and to God.
- 29 Let the prophets speak, two or three, and let the others discern.
- 30 But if a revelation is made to another sitting by, let the first keep silent.
- 31 For you all can prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be exhorted.
- 32 The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets,
- 33 for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints.

Verses 34–35 are absent in this reconstruction. They are absent from Marcion’s text and occupy a displaced position in a significant manuscript family. See Companion A, 1 Cor 14:34–35.

- 36 What!? Was it from you that the word of God went out? Or did it come to you alone?
- 37 If any man thinks himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him recognize the things which I write to you, that they are the commandment of the Lord.
- 38 But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.
- 39 Therefore, brothers, desire earnestly to prophesy, and don’t forbid speaking with other languages.
- 40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

Chapter 15

- 1 Now I declare to you, brothers, the Good News which I preached to you, which also you received, in which you also stand,
- 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold firmly the word which I preached to you —unless you believed in vain.
- 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
- 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day
- 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.
- 6 Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers at once, most of whom remain until now, but some have also fallen asleep.
- 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,
- 8 and last of all, as to the child born at the wrong time, he appeared to me also.
- 9 For I am the least of the apostles, who is not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the assembly of God.
- 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am. His grace which was given to me was not futile, but I worked more than all of them; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.
- 11 Whether then it is I or they, so we preach, and so you believed.
- 12 Now if Christ is preached, that he has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?
- 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither has Christ been raised.
- 14 If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith also is in vain.

- 15 Yes, we are also found false witnesses of God, because we testified about God that he raised up Christ, whom he didn't raise up, if it is so that the dead are not raised.
- 16 For if the dead aren't raised, neither has Christ been raised.
- 17 If Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins.
- 18 Then they also who are fallen asleep in Christ have perished.
- 19 If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable.
- 20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead. He became the first fruits of those who are asleep.
- 21 For since death came by man, the resurrection of the dead also came by man.
- 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.
- 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then those who are Christ's, at his coming.
- 24 Then the end comes, when he will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he will have abolished all rule and all authority and power.
- 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.
- 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death.
- 27 For, "He put all things in subjection under his feet." But when he says, "All things are put in subjection", it is evident that he is excepted who subjected all things to him.
- 28 When all things have been subjected to him, then the Son will also himself be subjected to him who subjected all things to him, that God may be all in all.
- 29 Or else what will they do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead aren't raised at all, why then are they baptized for the dead?
- 30 Why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour?
- 31 I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.
- 32 If I fought with animals at Ephesus for human purposes, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, then "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."
- 33 Don't be deceived! "Evil companionships corrupt good morals."
- 34 Wake up righteously, and don't sin, for some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.
- 35 But someone will say, "How are the dead raised?" and, "With what kind of body do they come?"
- 36 You foolish one, that which you yourself sow is not made alive unless it dies.
- 37 That which you sow, you don't sow the body that will be, but a bare grain, maybe of wheat, or of some other kind.
- 38 But God gives it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own.

- 39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.
- 40 There are also celestial bodies, and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial differs from that of the terrestrial.
- 41 There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.
- 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown perishable; it is raised imperishable.
- 43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.
- 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is also a spiritual body.
- 45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.
- 46 However that which is spiritual isn't first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual.
- 47 The first man is of the earth, made of dust. The second man is the Lord from heaven.
- 48 As is the one made of dust, such are those who are also made of dust; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.
- 49 As we have borne the image of those made of dust, let's also bear the image of the heavenly.
- 50 Now I say this, brothers, that flesh and blood can't inherit God's Kingdom; neither does the perishable inherit imperishable.
- 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,
- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.
- 53 For this perishable body must become imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.
- 54 But when this perishable body will have become imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then what is written will happen: "Death is swallowed up in victory."
- 55 "Death, where is your sting? Hades, where is your victory?"
- SUS 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.
- 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 16

- 1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I commanded the assemblies of Galatia, you do likewise.
- 2 On the first day of the week, let each one of you save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come.
- 3 When I arrive, I will send whoever you approve with letters to carry your gracious gift to Jerusalem.
- 4 If it is appropriate for me to go also, they will go with me.
- 5 But I will come to you when I have passed through Macedonia, for I am passing through Macedonia.
- 6 But with you it may be that I will stay, or even winter, that you may send me on my journey wherever I go.
- 7 For I do not wish to see you now in passing, but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits.
- 8 But I will stay at Ephesus until Pentecost,
- 9 for a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.
- 10 Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without fear, for he does the work of the Lord, as I also do.
- 11 Therefore let no one despise him. But set him forward on his journey in peace, that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brothers.
- 12 Now concerning Apollos, the brother, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brothers; and it was not at all his desire to come now; but he will come when he has an opportunity.
- 13 Watch! Stand firm in the faith! Be courageous! Be strong!
- 14 Let all that you do be done in love.
- 15 Now I beg you, brothers (you know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have set themselves to serve the saints),
- 16 that you also be in subjection to such, and to everyone who helps in the work and labors.
- 17 I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus; for that which was lacking on your part, they supplied.
- 18 For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge those who are like that.
- 19 The assemblies of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you much in the Lord, together with the assembly that is in their house.

20 All the brothers greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

21 This greeting is by me, Paul, with my own hand.

22 If any man doesn't love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. Come, Lord!

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

24 My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.

2 CORINTHIANS

In this reconstruction, 2 Corinthians survives nearly intact. The one significant removal is 6:14–7:1 — the ‘do not be unequally yoked’ passage that interrupts Paul’s appeal for reconciliation and introduces vocabulary found nowhere else in the authenticated letters. Without it, the sequence from 6:13 to 7:2 (‘make room for us’) reads as a continuous appeal. The rest of the letter — the defence of apostolic authority, the collection appeal, the fool’s speech — is retained in full.

The reconstructed letter reads as self-defence and reconciliation. The community has questioned Paul’s authority — perhaps under the influence of rival teachers he calls ‘super-apostles’ — and his argument is that weakness is not a disqualification but the very form authentic ministry takes, because the power belongs to God, not the vessel. The letter moves from consolation and the ministry of the new covenant (chapters 1–5) to a direct appeal for reconciliation (chapters 6–7), a generous account of the collection (chapters 8–9), and finally the ‘fool’s speech’ (chapters 10–12) in which Paul lists his sufferings as his only credentials. It ends where it begins: with the admission that he is weak, and the claim that this is where Christ’s strength shows.

Chapter 1

- PAR 1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the assembly of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia:
- 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort;

- 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.
- 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound to us, even so our comfort also abounds through Christ.
- 6 But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation. If we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer.
- 7 Our hope for you is steadfast, knowing that, since you are partakers of the sufferings, so also are you of the comfort.
- 8 For we don't desire to have you uninformed, brothers, concerning our affliction which happened to us in Asia, that we were weighed down exceedingly, beyond our power, so much that we despaired even of life.
- 9 Yes, we ourselves have had the sentence of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead,
- 10 who delivered us out of so great a death, and does deliver; on whom we have set our hope that he will also still deliver us;
- 11 you also helping together on our behalf by your supplication; that, for the gift given to us by means of many, thanks may be given by many persons on your behalf.
- 12 For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God we behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you.
- 13 For we write no other things to you, than what you read or even acknowledge, and I hope you will acknowledge to the end;
- 14 as also you acknowledged us in part, that we are your boasting, even as you also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.
- 15 In this confidence, I was determined to come first to you, that you might have a second benefit;
- 16 and by you to pass into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you, and to be sent forward by you on my journey to Judea.
- 17 When I therefore was thus determined, did I show fickleness? Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be the "Yes, yes" and the "No, no?"
- 18 But as God is faithful, our word toward you was not "Yes and no."
- 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, by me, Silvanus, and Timothy, was not "Yes and no," but in him is "Yes."
- 20 For however many are the promises of God, in him is the "Yes." Therefore also through him is the "Amen", to the glory of God through us.

- 21 Now he who establishes us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God;
22 who also sealed us, and gave us the down payment of the Spirit in our hearts.
23 But I call God for a witness to my soul, that I didn't come to Corinth to spare you.
24 Not that we control your faith, but are fellow workers with you for your joy. For you stand firm in faith.

Chapter 2

- 1 But I determined this for myself, that I would not come to you again in sorrow.
2 For if I make you sorry, then who will make me glad but he who is made sorry by me?
3 And I wrote this very thing to you, so that, when I came, I wouldn't have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy would be shared by all of you.
4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears, not that you should be made sorry, but that you might know the love that I have so abundantly for you.
5 But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow, not to me, but in part (that I not press too heavily) to you all.
6 This punishment which was inflicted by the many is sufficient for such a one;
7 so that on the contrary you should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his excessive sorrow.
8 Therefore I beg you to confirm your love toward him.
9 For to this end I also wrote, that I might know the proof of you, whether you are obedient in all things.
10 Now I also forgive whomever you forgive anything. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ,
11 that no advantage may be gained over us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.
12 Now when I came to Troas for the Good News of Christ, and when a door was opened to me in the Lord,
13 I had no relief for my spirit, because I didn't find Titus, my brother, but taking my leave of them, I went out into Macedonia.
14 Now thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and reveals through us the sweet aroma of his knowledge in every place.

- 15 For we are a sweet aroma of Christ to God, in those who are saved, and in those who perish;
- 16 to the one a stench from death to death; to the other a sweet aroma from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?
- 17 For we are not as so many, peddling the word of God. But as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, we speak in Christ.

Chapter 3

- 1 Are we beginning again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as do some, letters of commendation to you or from you?
- 2 You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men;
- 3 being revealed that you are a letter of Christ, served by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tablets of stone, but in tablets that are hearts of flesh.
- 4 Such confidence we have through Christ toward God;
- 5 not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God;
- 6 who also made us sufficient as servants of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
- 7 But if the service of death, written engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look steadfastly on the face of Moses for the glory of his face, which was passing away;
- 8 won't service of the Spirit be with much more glory?
- 9 For if the service of condemnation has glory, the service of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.
- 10 For most certainly that which has been made glorious has not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasses.
- 11 For if that which passes away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory.
- 12 Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness of speech,
- 13 and not as Moses, who put a veil on his face, that the children of Israel wouldn't look steadfastly on the end of that which was passing away.
- 14 But their minds were hardened, for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains, because in Christ it passes away.
- 15 But to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.

- 16 But whenever one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
- 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.
- 18 But we all, with unveiled face seeing the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Chapter 4

- 1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, even as we obtained mercy, we don't faint.
- 2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
- 3 Even if our Good News is veiled, it is veiled in those who are dying;
- 4 in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the Good News of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn on them.
- 5 For we don't preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake;
- 6 seeing it is God who said, "Light will shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
- 7 But we have this treasure in clay vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves.
- 8 We are pressed on every side, yet not crushed; perplexed, yet not to despair;
- 9 pursued, yet not forsaken; struck down, yet not destroyed;
- 10 always carrying in the body the putting to death of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.
- 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be revealed in our mortal flesh.
- 12 So then death works in us, but life in you.
- PAR 13 But having the same spirit of faith, "I believed, and therefore I spoke." We also believe, and therefore also we speak;
- 14 knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will present us with you.
- 15 For all things are for your sakes, that the grace, being multiplied through the many, may cause the thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

- 16 Therefore we don't faint, but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.
- 17 For our light affliction, which is for the moment, works for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory;
- 18 while we don't look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Chapter 5

- 1 For we know that if the earthly house of our tent is dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.
- 2 For most certainly in this we groan, longing to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven;
- 3 if so be that being clothed we will not be found naked.
- 4 For indeed we who are in this tent do groan, being burdened; not that we desire to be unclothed, but that we desire to be clothed, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.
- 5 Now he who made us for this very thing is God, who also gave to us the down payment of the Spirit.
- 6 Therefore we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord;
- 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight.
- 8 We are courageous, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.
- 9 Therefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well pleasing to him.
- SUS 10 For we must all be revealed before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
- 11 Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are revealed to God; and I hope that we are revealed also in your consciences.
- 12 For we are not commending ourselves to you again, but speak as giving you occasion of boasting on our behalf, that you may have something to answer those who boast in appearance, and not in heart.
- 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God. Or if we are of sober mind, it is for you.
- 14 For the love of Christ constrains us; because we judge thus, that one died for all, therefore all died.

- 15 He died for all, that those who live should no longer live to themselves, but to him who for their sakes died and rose again.
- 16 Therefore we know no one after the flesh from now on. Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more.
- 17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new.
- 18 But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ, and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation;
- 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not reckoning to them their trespasses, and having committed to us the word of reconciliation.
- 20 We are therefore ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.
- 21 For him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Chapter 6

- 1 Working together, we entreat also that you do not receive the grace of God in vain,
- 2 for he says, "At an acceptable time I listened to you, in a day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is the acceptable time. Behold, now is the day of salvation.
- 3 We give no occasion of stumbling in anything, that our service may not be blamed,
- 4 but in everything commending ourselves, as servants of God, in great endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses,
- 5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in labors, in watchings, in fastings;
- 6 in pureness, in knowledge, in perseverance, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in sincere love,
- 7 in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,
- 8 by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true;
- 9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and not killed;
- 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.
- 11 Our mouth is open to you, Corinthians. Our heart is enlarged.
- 12 You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.
- 13 Now in return, I speak as to my children, you also open your hearts.

Chapter 7

- 2 Open your hearts to us. We wronged no one. We corrupted no one. We took advantage of no one.
- 3 I say this not to condemn you, for I have said before, that you are in our hearts to die together and live together.
- 4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you. Great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I overflow with joy in all our affliction.
- 5 For even when we had come into Macedonia, our flesh had no relief, but we were afflicted on every side. Fightings were outside. Fear was inside.
- 6 Nevertheless, he who comforts the lowly, God, comforted us by the coming of Titus;
- 7 and not by his coming only, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, while he told us of your longing, your mourning, and your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced still more.
- 8 For though I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it, though I did regret it. For I see that my letter made you sorry, though just for a while.
- 9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that you were made sorry to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly way, that you might suffer loss by us in nothing.
- 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, which brings no regret. But the sorrow of the world produces death.
- 11 For behold, this same thing, that you were made sorry in a godly way, what earnest care it worked in you. Yes, what defense, indignation, fear, longing, zeal, and vengeance! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be pure in the matter.
- 12 So although I wrote to you, I wrote not for his cause that did the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered the wrong, but that your earnest care for us might be revealed in you in the sight of God.
- 13 Therefore we have been comforted. In our comfort we rejoiced the more exceedingly for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.
- 14 For if in anything I have boasted to him on your behalf, I was not disappointed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, so our glorying also which I made before Titus was found to be truth.
- 15 His affection is more abundantly toward you, while he remembers all of your obedience, how with fear and trembling you received him.
- 16 I rejoice that in everything I am confident concerning you.

Chapter 8

- 1 Moreover, brothers, we make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the assemblies of Macedonia;
- 2 how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded to the riches of their generosity.
- 3 For according to their power, I testify, yes and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord,
- 4 begging us with much entreaty to receive this grace and the fellowship in the service to the saints.
- 5 This was not as we had expected, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God.
- 6 So we urged Titus, that as he had made a beginning before, so he would also complete in you this grace.
- 7 But as you abound in everything, in faith, utterance, knowledge, all earnestness, and in your love to us, see that you also abound in this grace.
- 8 I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love.
- 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might become rich.
- 10 I give a judgment in this: for this is expedient for you, who were the first to start a year ago, not only to do, but also to be willing.
- 11 But now complete the doing also, that as there was the readiness to be willing, so there may be the completion also out of your ability.
- 12 For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what you have, not according to what you don't have.
- 13 For this is not that others may be eased and you distressed,
- 14 but for equality. Your abundance at this present time supplies their lack, that their abundance also may become a supply for your lack; that there may be equality.
- 15 As it is written, "He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack."
- 16 But thanks be to God, who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus.
- 17 For he indeed accepted our exhortation, but being himself very earnest, he went out to you of his own accord.
- 18 We have sent together with him the brother whose praise in the Good News is known throughout all the assemblies.

- 19 Not only so, but he was also appointed by the assemblies to travel with us in this grace, which is served by us to the glory of the Lord himself, and to show our readiness.
- 20 We are avoiding this, that any man should blame us concerning this abundance which is administered by us.
- 21 Having regard for honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.
- 22 We have sent with them our brother, whom we have many times proved earnest in many things, but now much more earnest, by reason of the great confidence which he has in you.
- 23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for you. As for our brothers, they are the apostles of the assemblies, the glory of Christ.
- 24 Therefore show the proof of your love to them before the assemblies, and of our boasting on your behalf.

Chapter 9

- 1 It is indeed unnecessary for me to write to you concerning the service to the saints,
- 2 for I know your readiness, of which I boast on your behalf to them of Macedonia, that Achaia has been prepared for a year past. Your zeal has stirred up very many of them.
- 3 But I have sent the brothers that our boasting on your behalf may not be in vain in this respect, that, just as I said, you may be prepared,
- 4 lest by any means, if anyone from Macedonia comes there with me and finds you unprepared, we (to say nothing of you) would be disappointed in this confident boasting.
- 5 I thought it necessary therefore to entreat the brothers that they would go before to you, and arrange ahead of time the generous gift that you promised before, that the same might be ready as a matter of generosity, and not of greediness.
- 6 Remember this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.
- 7 Let each man give according as he has determined in his heart; not grudgingly, or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.
- 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that you, always having all sufficiency in everything, may abound to every good work.
- 9 As it is written, "He has scattered abroad, he has given to the poor. His righteousness remains forever."

- 10 Now may he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, supply and multiply your seed for sowing, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;
- 11 you being enriched in everything to all generosity, which produces through us thanksgiving to God.
- 12 For this service of giving that you perform not only makes up for lack among the saints, but abounds also through much giving of thanks to God;
- 13 seeing that through the proof given by this service, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the Good News of Christ, and for the generosity of your contribution to them and to all;
- 14 while they themselves also, with supplication on your behalf, yearn for you by reason of the exceeding grace of God in you.
- 15 Now thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!

Chapter 10

- 1 Now I Paul, myself, entreat you by the humility and gentleness of Christ; I who in your presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.
- 2 Yes, I beg you that I may not, when present, show courage with the confidence with which I intend to be bold against some, who consider us to be walking according to the flesh.
- 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we don't wage war according to the flesh;
- 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the throwing down of strongholds,
- 5 throwing down imaginations and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ;
- 6 and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience will be made full.
- 7 Do you look at things only as they appear in front of your face? If anyone trusts in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again with himself, that, even as he is Christ's, so also we are Christ's.
- 8 For though I should boast somewhat abundantly concerning our authority, (which the Lord gave for building you up, and not for casting you down) I will not be disappointed,
- 9 that I may not seem as if I desire to terrify you by my letters.
- 10 For, "His letters", they say, "are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech is despised."

- 11 Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such are we also in deed when we are present.
- 12 For we are not bold to number or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves. But they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding.
- 13 But we will not boast beyond proper limits, but within the boundaries with which God appointed to us, which reach even to you.
- 14 For we don't stretch ourselves too much, as though we didn't reach to you. For we came even as far as to you with the Good News of Christ,
- 15 not boasting beyond proper limits in other men's labors, but having hope that as your faith grows, we will be abundantly enlarged by you in our sphere of influence,
- 16 so as to preach the Good News even to the parts beyond you, not to boast in what someone else has already done.
- 17 But "he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord."
- 18 For it isn't he who commends himself who is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

Chapter 11

- 1 I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness, but indeed you do bear with me.
- 2 For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy. For I married you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ.
- 3 But I am afraid that somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve in his craftiness, so your minds might be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.
- 4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or if you receive a different spirit, which you did not receive, or a different "good news", which you did not accept, you put up with that well enough.
- 5 For I reckon that I am not at all behind the very best apostles.
- 6 But though I am unskilled in speech, yet I am not unskilled in knowledge. No, in every way we have been revealed to you in all things.
- 7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached to you God's Good News free of charge?
- 8 I robbed other assemblies, taking wages from them that I might serve you.
- 9 When I was present with you and was in need, I wasn't a burden on anyone, for the brothers, when they came from Macedonia, supplied the measure of my need. In everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and I will continue to do so.

- 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no one will stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia.
- 11 Why? Because I don't love you? God knows.
- 12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them that desire an occasion, that in which they boast, they may be found even as we.
- 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as Christ's apostles.
- 14 And no wonder, for even Satan masquerades as an angel of light.
- 15 It is no great thing therefore if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.
- 16 I say again, let no one think me foolish. But if so, yet receive me as foolish, that I also may boast a little.
- 17 That which I speak, I don't speak according to the Lord, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting.
- 18 Seeing that many boast after the flesh, I will also boast.
- 19 For you bear with the foolish gladly, being wise.
- 20 For you bear with a man, if he brings you into bondage, if he devours you, if he takes you captive, if he exalts himself, if he strikes you on the face.
- 21 I speak by way of disparagement, as though we had been weak. Yet in whatever way anyone is bold (I speak in foolishness), I am bold also.
- 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the offspring of Abraham? So am I.
- 23 Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I am more so; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths often.
- 24 Five times from the Jews I received forty stripes minus one.
- 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I suffered shipwreck. I have been a night and a day in the deep.
- 26 I have been in travels often, perils of rivers, perils of robbers, perils from my countrymen, perils from the Gentiles, perils in the city, perils in the wilderness, perils in the sea, perils among false brothers;
- 27 in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, and in cold and nakedness.
- 28 Besides those things that are outside, there is that which presses on me daily: anxiety for all the assemblies.
- 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is caused to stumble, and I don't burn with indignation?

- 30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that concern my weakness.
- 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, he who is blessed forever more, knows that I don't lie.
- 32 In Damascus the governor under King Aretas guarded the Damascenes' city, desiring to arrest me.
- 33 Through a window I was let down in a basket by the wall, and escaped his hands.

Chapter 12

- 1 It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. For I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.
- 2 I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I don't know, or whether out of the body, I don't know; God knows), such a one caught up into the third heaven.
- 3 I know such a man (whether in the body, or outside of the body, I don't know; God knows),
- 4 how he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.
- 5 On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in my weaknesses.
- 6 For if I would desire to boast, I will not be foolish; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, so that no man may think more of me than that which he sees in me, or hears from me.
- 7 By reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted excessively, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, that I should not be exalted excessively.
- 8 Concerning this thing, I begged the Lord three times that it might depart from me.
- 9 He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Most gladly therefore I will rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest on me.
- 10 Therefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then am I strong.
- 11 I have become foolish in boasting. You compelled me, for I ought to have been commended by you, for in nothing was I inferior to the very best apostles, though I am nothing.
- 12 Truly the signs of an apostle were worked among you in all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty works.

- 13 For what is there in which you were made inferior to the rest of the assemblies, unless it is that I myself was not a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong.
- 14 Behold, this is the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you; for I seek not your possessions, but you. For the children ought not to save up for the parents, but the parents for the children.
- 15 I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less?
- 16 But be it so, I did not myself burden you. But, being crafty, I caught you with deception.
- 17 Did I take advantage of you by anyone of them whom I have sent to you?
- 18 I exhorted Titus, and I sent the brother with him. Did Titus take any advantage of you? Didn't we walk in the same spirit? Didn't we walk in the same steps?
- 19 Again, do you think that we are excusing ourselves to you? In the sight of God we speak in Christ. But all things, beloved, are for your edifying.
- 20 For I am afraid that by any means, when I come, I might find you not the way I want to, and that I might be found by you as you don't desire; that by any means there would be strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, whisperings, proud thoughts, riots;
- 21 that again when I come my God would humble me before you, and I would mourn for many of those who have sinned before now, and not repented of the uncleanness and sexual immorality and lustfulness which they committed.

Chapter 13

- 1 This is the third time I am coming to you. "At the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."
- 2 I have said beforehand, and I do say beforehand, as when I was present the second time, so now, being absent, I write to those who have sinned before now, and to all the rest, that, if I come again, I will not spare;
- 3 seeing that you seek a proof of Christ who speaks in me; who toward you is not weak, but is powerful in you.
- 4 For he was crucified through weakness, yet he lives through the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we will live with him through the power of God toward you.
- 5 Examine your own selves, whether you are in the faith. Test your own selves. Or don't you know as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.
- 6 But I hope that you will know that we aren't disqualified.

- 7 Now I pray to God that you do no evil; not that we may appear approved, but that you may do that which is honorable, though we are as reprobate.
- 8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.
- 9 For we rejoice when we are weak and you are strong. And this we also pray for, even your perfecting.
- 10 For this cause I write these things while absent, that I may not deal sharply when present, according to the authority which the Lord gave me for building up, and not for tearing down.
- 11 Finally, brothers, rejoice. Be perfected, be comforted, be of the same mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.
- 12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.
- 13 All the saints greet you.
- 14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's love, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

GALATIANS

In this reconstruction, Galatians is the sharpest letter in the corpus and the one whose reconstruction changes its argument most precisely. The passages removed are concentrated in chapter 3: the Abraham-faith-Gentile chain (3:6–9), the ‘law as guardian/tutor until Christ came’ section (3:15–25 with 3:22 retained — directly attested in Marcion by Tertullian — standing as an authentic island in the removed range), and the Marcionite-variant covenant wording in 4:24–25. Also removed are 1:18 (the Jerusalem visit), 3:29 (the Abraham-offspring coda), and 6:10 (the ‘household of faith’ community marker). What those passages do is ground Gentile inclusion in the Abrahamic covenant — making Paul’s gospel a fulfilment of Jewish promise rather than a replacement of it. The ‘Israel of God’ closing at 6:16 is retained: BeDuhn treats Tertullian’s allusion as sufficient evidence that Marcion’s text contained it, and the phrase is not a source-backed PAR case. Without the removed and variant passages, the letter argues directly: the Spirit is received through faith, not law; the law-observant position is incompatible with the gospel Paul received; there is neither Jew nor Greek. The argument is more radical without the covenant-continuity frame.

The gospel he preaches was received by revelation, not transmitted by any human authority, and it cannot coexist with the law-observant version being promoted in Galatia. Chapters 1–2 establish his independence — he confronted Peter to his face; he received nothing from Jerusalem. Chapters 3–4 make the theological case: you received the Spirit through faith, not law-works; the law brought a curse and Christ redeemed from it; there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female. Chapters 5–6 draw out the implication: freedom from the law is not licence but a call to serve one another through love, to walk by the Spirit, to bear one another’s burdens. Without the covenant-continuity frame, that case rests entirely on direct spiritual experience and the logic of grace alone.

Chapter 1

- 1 Paul, an apostle (not from men, nor through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead),
- 2 and all the brothers who are with me, to the assemblies of Galatia:
- 3 Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 4 who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father—
- 5 to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
- 6 I marvel that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different “good news”;
- 7 and there isn’t another “good news.” Only there are some who trouble you, and want to pervert the Good News of Christ.
- 8 But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you any “good news” other than that which we preached to you, let him be cursed.
- 9 As we have said before, so I now say again: if any man preaches to you any “good news” other than that which you received, let him be cursed.
- 10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? For if I were still pleasing men, I wouldn’t be a servant of Christ.
- 11 But I make known to you, brothers, concerning the Good News which was preached by me, that it is not according to man.
- 12 For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ.
- 13 For you have heard of my way of living in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the assembly of God, and ravaged it.
- 14 I advanced in the Jews’ religion beyond many of my own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.
- 15 But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me through his grace,
- 16 to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I didn’t immediately confer with flesh and blood,
- 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia. Then I returned to Damascus.
- 19 But of the other apostles I saw no one, except James, the Lord’s brother.
- 20 Now about the things which I write to you, behold, before God, I’m not lying.

- 21 Then I came to the regions of Syria and Cilicia.
- 22 I was still unknown by face to the assemblies of Judea which were in Christ,
- 23 but they only heard: "He who once persecuted us now preaches the faith that he once tried to destroy."
- 24 And they glorified God in me.

Chapter 2

- 1 Then after a period of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me.
- 2 I went up by revelation, and I laid before them the Good News which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately before those who were respected, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain.
- 3 But not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.
- 4 This was because of the false brothers secretly brought in, who stole in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage;
- 5 to whom we gave no place in the way of subjection, not for an hour, that the truth of the Good News might continue with you.
- 6 But from those who were reputed to be important (whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God doesn't show partiality to man)—they, I say, who were respected imparted nothing to me,
- 7 but to the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the Good News for the uncircumcised, even as Peter with the Good News for the circumcised
- 8 (for he who worked through Peter in the apostleship with the circumcised also worked through me with the Gentiles);
- 9 and when they perceived the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcision.
- 10 They only asked us to remember the poor—which very thing I was also zealous to do.
- 11 But when Peter came to Antioch, I resisted him to his face, because he stood condemned.
- 12 For before some people came from James, he ate with the Gentiles. But when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.
- 13 And the rest of the Jews joined him in his hypocrisy; so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

- 14 But when I saw that they didn't walk uprightly according to the truth of the Good News, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live as the Gentiles do, and not as the Jews do, why do you compel the Gentiles to live as the Jews do?"
- 15 "We, being Jews by nature, and not Gentile sinners,
- 16 yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law, because no flesh will be justified by the works of the law.
- 17 But if, while we sought to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also were found sinners, is Christ a servant of sin? Certainly not!
- 18 For if I build up again those things which I destroyed, I prove myself a law-breaker.
- 19 For I, through the law, died to the law, that I might live to God.
- 20 I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me. That life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.
- 21 I don't reject the grace of God. For if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nothing!"

Chapter 3

- 1 Foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you not to obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly portrayed among you as crucified?
- 2 I just want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by hearing of faith?
- 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now completed in the flesh?
- 4 Did you suffer so many things in vain, if it is indeed in vain?
- 5 He therefore who supplies the Spirit to you, and does miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the law, or by hearing of faith?
- 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse. For it is written, "Cursed is everyone who doesn't continue in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them."
- 11 Now that no man is justified by the law before God is evident, for, "The righteous will live by faith."
- 12 The law is not of faith, but, "The man who does them will live by them."
- 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. For it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree,"
- PAR 14 that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

- 22 But the Scriptures imprisoned all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.
- 26 For you are all children of God, through faith in Christ Jesus.
- 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
- 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Chapter 4

- 1 But I say that so long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a bondservant, though he is lord of all;
- 2 but is under guardians and stewards until the day appointed by the father.
- 3 So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental principles of the world.
- 4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent out his Son
- 5 that he might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of children.
- 6 And because you are children, God sent out the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!"
- 7 So you are no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.
- 8 However at that time, not knowing God, you were in bondage to those who by nature are not gods.
- 9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, why do you turn back again to the weak and miserable elemental principles, to which you desire to be in bondage all over again?
- 10 You observe days, months, seasons, and years.
- 11 I am afraid for you, that I might have wasted my labor for you.
- 12 I beg you, brothers, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong,
- 13 but you know that because of weakness in the flesh I preached the Good News to you the first time.
- 14 That which was a temptation to you in my flesh, you didn't despise nor reject; but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.
- 15 What was the blessing you enjoyed? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.

16 So then, have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?

17 They zealously seek you in no good way. No, they desire to alienate you, that you may seek them.

18 But it is always good to be zealous in a good cause, and not only when I am present with you.

19 My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ is formed in you—

20 but I could wish to be present with you now, and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

21 Tell me, you that desire to be under the law, don't you listen to the law?

22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the servant, and one by the free woman.

23 However, the son by the servant was born according to the flesh, but the son by the free woman was born through promise.

SUS 24 These things contain an allegory, for these are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children to bondage, which is Hagar.

SUS 25 For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to the Jerusalem that exists now, for she is in bondage with her children.

26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

27 For it is written, "Rejoice, you barren who don't bear. Break out and shout, you that don't travail. For more are the children of the desolate than of her who has a husband."

28 Now we, brothers, as Isaac was, are children of promise.

29 But as then, he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now.

30 However what does the Scripture say? "Throw out the servant and her son, for the son of the servant will not inherit with the son of the free woman."

31 So then, brothers, we are not children of a servant, but of the free woman.

Chapter 5

1 Stand firm therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and don't be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

2 Behold, I, Paul, tell you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing.

3 Yes, I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

- 4 You are alienated from Christ, you who desire to be justified by the law. You have fallen away from grace.
- 5 For we, through the Spirit, by faith wait for the hope of righteousness.
- 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision amounts to anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith working through love.
- 7 You were running well! Who interfered with you that you should not obey the truth?
- 8 This persuasion is not from him who calls you.
- 9 A little yeast grows through the whole lump.
- 10 I have confidence toward you in the Lord that you will think no other way. But he who troubles you will bear his judgment, whoever he is.
- 11 But I, brothers, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been removed.
- 12 I wish that those who disturb you would cut themselves off.
- 13 For you, brothers, were called for freedom. Only don't use your freedom for gain to the flesh, but through love be servants to one another.
- 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
- 15 But if you bite and devour one another, be careful that you don't consume one another.
- 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you won't fulfill the lust of the flesh.
- 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, that you may not do the things that you desire.
- 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.
- 19 Now the deeds of the flesh are obvious, which are: adultery, sexual immorality, uncleanness, lustfulness,
- 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousies, outbursts of anger, rivalries, divisions, heresies,
- 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these; of which I forewarn you, even as I also forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit God's Kingdom.
- 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith,
- 23 gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.
- 24 Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts.
- 25 If we live by the Spirit, let's also walk by the Spirit.

26 Let's not become conceited, provoking one another, and envying one another.

Chapter 6

1 Brothers, even if a man is caught in some fault, you who are spiritual must restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to yourself so that you also aren't tempted.

2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

3 For if a man thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

4 But let each man examine his own work, and then he will have reason to boast in himself, and not in someone else.

5 For each man will bear his own burden.

6 But let him who is taught in the word share all good things with him who teaches.

7 Don't be deceived. God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

8 For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption. But he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

9 Let us not be weary in doing good, for we will reap in due season, if we don't give up.

11 See with what large letters I write to you with my own hand.

12 As many as desire to make a good impression in the flesh compel you to be circumcised; just so they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

13 For even they who receive circumcision don't keep the law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh.

14 But far be it from me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

15 For in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

16 As many as walk by this rule, peace and mercy be on them, and on God's Israel.

17 From now on, let no one cause me any trouble, for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus branded on my body.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

EPHESIANS

Letter-level caution: Pauline authorship is disputed; this letter is included for adjudication. See Companion A, “A Note on the Letter Count”.

In this reconstruction, Ephesians (the letter Marcion called Laodiceans) is a letter about cosmic reconciliation and the unity of all things in Christ. Its cosmic Christology in chapters 1–3 — the mystery hidden before the ages, every power subordinated, the dividing wall broken down — is retained in full. What is absent is the *Haustafel* of 5:22–6:9: wives submit to husbands, husbands love wives, children obey parents, slaves obey masters. That section, absent from Marcion’s text and identified by Walker as secondary, is the most institutionally complete household code in the Pauline corpus. Without it, the letter moves from the cosmic unity of chapter 4 directly to the armour of God in chapter 6 — a different letter about a different kind of battle.

The scope of what has happened in Christ is cosmic — not just the salvation of individuals but the reconciliation of all things. Chapters 1–3 build the claim in dense theological language: chosen before the foundation of the world; the mystery of Christ hidden for ages and now revealed; Jew and Gentile together in one body; the dividing wall demolished. Chapters 4–6 draw out the practical shape of living inside that reality: walk worthy of the calling, put on the new self, speak truth, do not grieve the Spirit, stand firm in the armour God provides. Without the *Haustafel*, the practical section has no hierarchy of submission — only the call to stand together against what is arrayed against you.

Chapter 1

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- SUS 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ;
- SUS 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without defect before him in love;
- SUS 5 having predestined us for adoption as children through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his desire,
- 6 to the praise of the glory of his grace, by which he freely gave us favor in the Beloved,
- 7 in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,
- 8 which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,
- 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him
- 10 to an administration of the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth, in him;
- 11 in whom also we were assigned an inheritance, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who does all things after the counsel of his will;
- 12 to the end that we should be to the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped in Christ.
- 13 In him you also, having heard the word of the truth, the Good News of your salvation—in whom, having also believed, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,
- 14 who is a pledge of our inheritance, to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of his glory.
- 15 For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and the love which you have toward all the saints,
- 16 don't cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers,
- 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him;
- 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
- 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might
- 20 which he worked in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places,
- 21 far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come.

- 22 He put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things for the assembly,
- 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Chapter 2

- 1 You were made alive when you were dead in transgressions and sins,
- 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience;
- SUS 3 among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.
- 4 But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us,
- 5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
- 6 and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
- 7 that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus;
- 8 for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,
- 9 not of works, that no one would boast.
- 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we would walk in them.
- 11 Therefore remember that once you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “uncircumcision” by that which is called “circumcision”, (in the flesh, made by hands);
- SUS 12 that you were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world.
- 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off are made near in the blood of Christ.
- 14 For he is our peace, who made both one, and broke down the middle wall of partition,
- 15 having abolished in his flesh the hostility, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man of the two, making peace;
- 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, having killed the hostility thereby.

17 He came and preached peace to you who were far off and to those who were near.

18 For through him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

19 So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,

SUS 20 being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone;

21 in whom the whole building, fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord;

22 in whom you also are built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

Chapter 3

1 For this cause I, Paul, am the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles,

2 if it is so that you have heard of the administration of that grace of God which was given me toward you;

3 how that by revelation the mystery was made known to me, as I wrote before in few words,

4 by which, when you read, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ;

5 which in other generations was not made known to the children of men, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;

6 that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of his promise in Christ Jesus through the Good News,

7 of which I was made a servant, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of his power.

8 To me, the very least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,

SUS 9 and to make all men see what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things through Jesus Christ;

10 to the intent that now through the assembly the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places,

11 according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord;

12 in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him.

13 Therefore I ask that you may not lose heart at my troubles for you, which are your glory.

14 For this cause, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

- 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,
- 16 that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that you may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man;
- 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
- 18 may be strengthened to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and height and depth,
- 19 and to know Christ's love which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
- 20 Now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,
- 21 to him be the glory in the assembly and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Chapter 4

- 1 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called,
- 2 with all lowliness and humility, with patience, bearing with one another in love;
- 3 being eager to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you also were called in one hope of your calling;
- 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
- 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in us all.
- 7 But to each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.
- 8 Therefore he says, "When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men."
- 9 Now this, "He ascended", what is it but that he also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?
- 10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.
- 11 He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, shepherds and teachers;
- 12 for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving, to the building up of the body of Christ;

- 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;
- 14 that we may no longer be children, tossed back and forth and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error;
- 15 but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, Christ;
- 16 from whom all the body, being fitted and knit together through that which every joint supplies, according to the working in measure of each individual part, makes the body increase to the building up of itself in love.
- 17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,
- 18 being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their hearts;
- 19 who having become callous gave themselves up to lust, to work all uncleanness with greediness.
- 20 But you did not learn Christ that way;
- 21 if indeed you heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus:
- SUS 22 that you put away, as concerning your former way of life, the old man, that grows corrupt after the lusts of deceit;
- SUS 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
- SUS 24 and put on the new man, who in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.
- 25 Therefore putting away falsehood, speak truth each one with his neighbor. For we are members of one another.
- 26 "Be angry, and don't sin." Don't let the sun go down on your wrath,
- 27 and don't give place to the devil.
- 28 Let him who stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, producing with his hands something that is good, that he may have something to give to him who has need.
- 29 Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but only what is good for building others up as the need may be, that it may give grace to those who hear.
- 30 Don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
- 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, outcry, and slander, be put away from you, with all malice.
- 32 And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, just as God also in Christ forgave you.

Chapter 5

- 1 Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children.
- 2 Walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling fragrance.
- 3 But sexual immorality, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be mentioned among you, as becomes saints;
- 4 nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not appropriate; but rather giving of thanks.
- 5 Know this for sure, that no sexually immoral person, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God.
- 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words.
- 7 Therefore don't be partakers with them.
- 8 For you were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord. Walk as children of light,
- 9 for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth,
- 10 proving what is well pleasing to the Lord.
- 11 Have no fellowship with the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but rather even reprove them.
- 12 For the things which are done by them in secret, it is a shame even to speak of.
- 13 But all things, when they are reproved, are revealed by the light, for everything that reveals is light.
- 14 Therefore he says, "Awake, you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."
- 15 Therefore watch carefully how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise;
- 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
- 17 Therefore don't be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
- 18 Don't be drunken with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,
- 19 speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; singing, and making melody in your heart to the Lord;
- 20 giving thanks always concerning all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God, even the Father;
- 21 subjecting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.

Chapter 6

- 10** Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might.
- 11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
- 12** For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world's rulers of the darkness of this age, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.
- 13** Therefore put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.
- 14** Stand therefore, having the belt of truth buckled around your waist, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,
- 15** and having fitted your feet with the preparation of the Good News of peace;
- 16** above all, taking up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one.
- 17** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;
- 18** with all prayer and requests, praying at all times in the Spirit, and being watchful to this end in all perseverance and requests for all the saints:
- 19** on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the Good News,
- 20** for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.
- 21** But that you also may know my affairs, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make known to you all things;
- 22** whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts.
- 23** Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 24** Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love. Amen.

PHILIPPIANS

In this reconstruction, Philippians is the cleanest letter in the corpus. One verse carries a SUS flag; nothing has been removed. It is the control letter for the disputed epistles — attested early (Polycarp cites it around 130 CE), internally consistent, and without the vocabulary or structural patterns that mark the interpolated passages elsewhere. The Christ-hymn of 2:6–11, the ‘I can do all things’ of 4:13, the peace that passes understanding — all of it is here, exactly as in the canonical text. Reading it after Romans makes the contrast visible.

Paul is writing from prison to a community he loves, and the letter’s mood is warmth under pressure. The central movement is the mind formed by Christ: the self-emptying of 2:6–11 (Christ did not grasp equality with God but poured himself out), applied in chapter 3 to Paul’s own life (counting everything loss for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ), and resolved in chapter 4 (contentment in every circumstance; peace that passes understanding; a mind set on what is true and honourable). Paul does not argue so much as demonstrate — working out in real time what it looks like to hold everything loosely. It is the most personally revealing letter in this collection.

Chapter 1

- 1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ; To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and servants:
- 2 Grace to you, and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3 I thank my God whenever I remember you,
- 4 always in every request of mine on behalf of you all, making my requests with joy,
- 5 for your partnership in furtherance of the Good News from the first day until now;

- 6 being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.
- 7 It is even right for me to think this way on behalf of all of you, because I have you in my heart, because, both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the Good News, you all are partakers with me of grace.
- 8 For God is my witness, how I long after all of you in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus.
- 9 This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment;
- 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offense to the day of Christ;
- 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.
- 12 Now I desire to have you know, brothers, that the things which happened to me have turned out rather to the progress of the Good News;
- 13 so that it became evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my bonds are in Christ;
- 14 and that most of the brothers in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear.
- 15 Some indeed preach Christ even out of envy and strife, and some also out of good will.
- 16 The former insincerely preach Christ from selfish ambition, thinking that they add affliction to my chains;
- 17 but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the Good News.
- 18 What does it matter? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed. I rejoice in this, yes, and will rejoice.
- 19 For I know that this will turn out to my salvation, through your prayers and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,
- 20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will in no way be disappointed, but with all boldness, as always, now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death.
- 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.
- 22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will bring fruit from my work; yet I don't know what I will choose.
- 23 But I am in a dilemma between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.
- 24 Yet, to remain in the flesh is more needful for your sake.

- 25 Having this confidence, I know that I will remain, yes, and remain with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith,
- 26 that your rejoicing may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence with you again.
- 27 Only let your way of life be worthy of the Good News of Christ, that, whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your state, that you stand firm in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the Good News;
- 28 and in nothing frightened by the adversaries, which is for them a proof of destruction, but to you of salvation, and that from God.
- 29 Because it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer on his behalf,
- 30 having the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear is in me.

Chapter 2

- 1 If therefore there is any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassion,
- 2 make my joy full, by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind;
- 3 doing nothing through rivalry or through conceit, but in humility, each counting others better than himself;
- 4 each of you not just looking to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.
- 5 Have this in your mind, which was also in Christ Jesus,
- 6 who, existing in the form of God, didn't consider equality with God a thing to be grasped,
- SUS 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.
- 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, yes, the death of the cross.
- 9 Therefore God also highly exalted him, and gave to him the name which is above every name;
- 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, those on earth, and those under the earth,
- 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
- 12 So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation.

- 13 For it is God who works in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.
- 14 Do all things without murmurings and disputes,
- 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without defect in the middle of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you are seen as lights in the world,
- 16 holding up the word of life; that I may have something to boast in the day of Christ, that I didn't run in vain nor labor in vain.
- 17 Yes, and if I am poured out on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and rejoice with you all.
- 18 In the same way, you also rejoice, and rejoice with me.
- 19 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered up when I know how you are doing.
- 20 For I have no one else like-minded, who will truly care about you.
- 21 For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ.
- 22 But you know the proof of him, that, as a child serves a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the Good News.
- 23 Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it will go with me.
- 24 But I trust in the Lord that I myself also will come shortly.
- 25 But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier, and your apostle and servant of my need;
- 26 since he longed for you all, and was very troubled, because you had heard that he was sick.
- 27 For indeed he was sick, nearly to death, but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, that I might not have sorrow on sorrow.
- 28 I have sent him therefore the more diligently, that, when you see him again, you may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.
- 29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy, and hold such in honor,
- 30 because for the work of Christ he came near to death, risking his life to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me.

Chapter 3

- 1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not tiresome, but for you it is safe.
- 2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision.

- 3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh;
- 4 though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he has confidence in the flesh, I yet more:
- 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;
- 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the assembly; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless.
- 7 However, I consider those things that were gain to me as a loss for Christ.
- 8 Yes most certainly, and I count all things to be a loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and count them nothing but refuse, that I may gain Christ
- 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;
- 10 that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed to his death;
- 11 if by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.
- 12 Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect; but I press on, that I may take hold of that for which also I was taken hold of by Christ Jesus.
- 13 Brothers, I don't regard myself as yet having taken hold, but one thing I do. Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before,
- 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.
- 15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, think this way. If in anything you think otherwise, God will also reveal that to you.
- 16 Nevertheless, to the extent that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule. Let us be of the same mind.
- 17 Brothers, be imitators together of me, and note those who walk this way, even as you have us for an example.
- 18 For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, as the enemies of the cross of Christ,
- 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who think about earthly things.
- 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from where we also wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

- 21 who will change the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working by which he is able even to subject all things to himself.

Chapter 4

- 1 Therefore, my brothers, beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.
- 2 I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same way in the Lord.
- 3 Yes, I beg you also, true partner, help these women, for they labored with me in the Good News, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.
- 4 Rejoice in the Lord always! Again I will say, "Rejoice!"
- 5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.
- 6 In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.
- 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.
- 8 Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honorable, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think about these things.
- 9 The things which you learned, received, heard, and saw in me: do these things, and the God of peace will be with you.
- 10 But I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length you have revived your thought for me; in which you did indeed take thought, but you lacked opportunity.
- 11 Not that I speak because of lack, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content in it.
- 12 I know how to be humbled, and I know also how to abound. In everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in need.
- 13 I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.
- 14 However you did well that you shared in my affliction.
- 15 You yourselves also know, you Philippians, that in the beginning of the Good News, when I departed from Macedonia, no assembly shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you only.
- 16 For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again to my need.

17 Not that I seek for the gift, but I seek for the fruit that increases to your account.

18 But I have all things, and abound. I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, a sweet-smelling fragrance, an acceptable and well-pleasing sacrifice to God.

19 My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

20 Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you.

22 All the saints greet you, especially those who are of Caesar's household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

COLOSSIANS

Letter-level caution: Pauline authorship is disputed; this letter is included for adjudication. See Companion A, “A Note on the Letter Count”.

In this reconstruction, Colossians is the most uncertain letter in the corpus — 27 of its 95 verses are absent from this text. Nine are REM: the Haustafel (3:18–4:1: wives, husbands, children, slaves), removed on confirmed grounds because it mirrors Ephesians’ household code and is absent from Marcion’s Apostolikon on the same evidence. Eighteen further verses are SUS-excluded: the greetings, travel notices, and closing exhortations across chapters 3–4 (3:11, 3:15–17, 4:2–9, 4:12–13, 4:15–18). These carry strong grounds for suspicion but not the full evidence threshold for confirmed removal; they are absent as a cautious adjudication, not a settled finding. Four SUS verses remain in the text and are marked in the margin (3:5, 3:6, 3:9, 3:10).

What remains is the cosmic Christ hymn of 1:15–20 — firstborn of all creation, all things created in him and for him — and the reconciliation argument of chapters 1–2. Christ is sufficient — no additional power, practice, or intermediary is needed or valid, because all fullness dwells in him. The ‘philosophy’ being warned against in chapter 2 appears to involve angel-veneration, food and calendar observances, and mystical visionary practices; Paul’s response is that these are shadows, and the substance is Christ. The cosmic hymn of 1:15–20 sets the frame: firstborn of all creation, the one in whom all things hold together, reconciling all things through the blood of his cross. Chapter 2 applies it directly: those principalities have been disarmed; do not let anyone disqualify you. Read this letter as provisional — 28 per cent of the letter is absent from this reconstruction, and the apparatus is least confident here of any letter in the corpus.

Chapter 1

- 1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
- 2 to the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3 We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,
- 4 having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have toward all the saints,
- 5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the Good News,
- 6 which has come to you; even as it is in all the world and is bearing fruit and growing, as it does in you also, since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;
- 7 even as you learned of Epaphras our beloved fellow servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf,
- 8 who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.
- 9 For this cause, we also, since the day we heard this, don't cease praying and making requests for you, that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
- 10 that you may walk worthily of the Lord, to please him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;
- 11 strengthened with all power, according to the might of his glory, for all endurance and perseverance with joy;
- 12 giving thanks to the Father, who made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;
- 13 who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of his love;
- 14 in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins;
- PAR 15 who is the image of the invisible God.
- SUS 16 For by him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and for him.
- 17 He is before all things, and in him all things are held together.
- 18 He is the head of the body, the assembly, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.
- 19 For all the fullness was pleased to dwell in him;

- 20 and through him to reconcile all things to himself, by him, whether things on the earth, or things in the heavens.
- 21 You, being in past times alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil deeds,
- 22 yet now he has reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without defect and blameless before him,
- 23 if it is so that you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the Good News which you heard, which is being proclaimed in all creation under heaven; of which I, Paul, was made a servant.
- 24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the assembly;
- 25 of which I was made a servant, according to the stewardship of God which was given me toward you, to fulfill the word of God,
- 26 the mystery which has been hidden for ages and generations. But now it has been revealed to his saints,
- 27 to whom God was pleased to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory;
- 28 whom we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus;
- 29 for which I also labor, striving according to his working, which works in me mightily.

Chapter 2

- 1 For I desire to have you know how greatly I struggle for you, and for those at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;
- 2 that their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love, and gaining all riches of the full assurance of understanding, that they may know the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,
- 3 in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden.
- 4 Now this I say that no one may delude you with persuasiveness of speech.
- 5 For though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, rejoicing and seeing your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.
- 6 As therefore you received Christ Jesus, the Lord, walk in him,
- 7 rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, even as you were taught, abounding in it in thanksgiving.

- 8 Be careful that you don't let anyone rob you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the elements of the world, and not after Christ.
- 9 For in him all the fullness of the Deity dwells bodily,
- 10 and in him you are made full, who is the head of all principality and power;
- 11 in whom you were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ;
- 12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.
- 13 You were dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh. He made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,
- 14 wiping out the handwriting in ordinances which was against us; and he has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross;
- 15 having stripped the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.
- 16 Let no one therefore judge you in eating, or in drinking, or with respect to a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day,
- 17 which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's.
- 18 Let no one rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility, dwelling in the things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind
- 19 and not holding firmly to the Head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and ligaments, grows with God's growth.
- 20 If you died with Christ from the elements of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to ordinances,
- 21 "Don't handle, nor taste, nor touch"
- 22 (all of which perish with use), according to the precepts and doctrines of men?
- 23 Which things indeed appear like wisdom in self-imposed worship, and humility, and severity to the body; but aren't of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.

Chapter 3

- 1 If then you were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God.
- 2 Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are on the earth.
- 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
- 4 When Christ, our life, is revealed, then you will also be revealed with him in glory.

- SUS 5 Put to death therefore your members which are on the earth: sexual immorality, uncleanness, depraved passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry;
- SUS 6 for which things' sake the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience.
- 7 You also once walked in those, when you lived in them;
- 8 but now you also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and shameful speaking out of your mouth.
- SUS 9 Don't lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his doings,
- SUS 10 and have put on the new man, who is being renewed in knowledge after the image of his Creator,
- 12 Put on therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, humility, and perseverance;
- 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, if any man has a complaint against any; even as Christ forgave you, so you also do.
- 14 Above all these things, walk in love, which is the bond of perfection.

Chapter 4

- 10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, greets you, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you received commandments, "if he comes to you, receive him"),
- 11 and Jesus who is called Justus. These are my only fellow workers for God's Kingdom who are of the circumcision, men who have been a comfort to me.
- 14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you.

1 THESSALONIANS

In this reconstruction, 1 Thessalonians is among the most intact letters in the corpus. The one removal is 2:14–16 — the passage describing Jews as those who ‘killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets’ and ‘please not God’. This passage is post-70 CE on internal grounds (it reads as a reaction to the destruction of Jerusalem), and its vocabulary departs from authenticated Paul. Without it, chapter 2 is Paul’s personal account of his ministry among the Thessalonians — warm, autobiographical, without the anti-Jewish polemic that made it a proof-text for later persecution. The rest of the letter — the eschatology of chapter 4, the day-of-the-Lord teaching of chapter 5 — is retained in full.

Paul is caring for his earliest community from a distance, after leaving them before he felt his work was finished. The letter is more pastoral than theological — it recounts his time with them, declares his continuing love, and addresses their specific anxieties. The main weight falls on the question of death and the Lord’s return: the Thessalonians are grieving community members who have died and are worried those people have missed something. Paul’s answer is that the dead in Christ will rise first; the living will be gathered to them; they are all in this together. The letter closes with quick practical exhortations — rejoice always, pray without ceasing, do not quench the Spirit — that feel like a parent writing to children they trust.

Chapter 1

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the assembly of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 We always give thanks to God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers,

- 3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and perseverance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father.
- 4 We know, brothers loved by God, that you are chosen,
- 5 and that our Good News came to you not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and with much assurance. You know what kind of men we showed ourselves to be among you for your sake.
- 6 You became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,
- 7 so that you became an example to all who believe in Macedonia and in Achaia.
- 8 For from you the word of the Lord has been declared, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone out; so that we need not to say anything.
- 9 For they themselves report concerning us what kind of a reception we had from you; and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God,
- 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Chapter 2

- 1 For you yourselves know, brothers, our visit to you wasn't in vain,
- 2 but having suffered before and been shamefully treated, as you know, at Philippi, we grew bold in our God to tell you the Good News of God in much conflict.
- 3 For our exhortation is not of error, nor of uncleanness, nor in deception.
- 4 But even as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, who tests our hearts.
- 5 For neither were we at any time found using words of flattery, as you know, nor a cloak of covetousness (God is witness),
- 6 nor seeking glory from men (neither from you nor from others), when we might have claimed authority as apostles of Christ.
- 7 But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother cherishes her own children.
- 8 Even so, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you, not the Good News of God only, but also our own souls, because you had become very dear to us.
- 9 For you remember, brothers, our labor and travail; for working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached to you the Good News of God.
- 10 You are witnesses with God, how holy, righteously, and blamelessly we behaved ourselves toward you who believe.

- 11 As you know, we exhorted, comforted, and implored every one of you, as a father does his own children,
- 12 to the end that you should walk worthily of God, who calls you into his own Kingdom and glory.
- 13 For this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when you received from us the word of the message of God, you accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also works in you who believe.
- 17 But we, brothers, being bereaved of you for a short season, in presence, not in heart, tried even harder to see your face with great desire,
- 18 because we wanted to come to you—indeed, I, Paul, once and again—but Satan hindered us.
- 19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Isn't it even you, before our Lord Jesus at his coming?
- 20 For you are our glory and our joy.

Chapter 3

- 1 Therefore when we couldn't stand it any longer, we thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone,
- 2 and sent Timothy, our brother and God's servant in the Good News of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith;
- 3 that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you know that we are appointed to this task.
- 4 For most certainly, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we are to suffer affliction, even as it happened, and you know.
- 5 For this cause I also, when I couldn't stand it any longer, sent that I might know your faith, for fear that by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor would have been in vain.
- 6 But when Timothy came just now to us from you, and brought us glad news of your faith and love, and that you have good memories of us always, longing to see us, even as we also long to see you;
- 7 for this cause, brothers, we were comforted over you in all our distress and affliction through your faith.
- 8 For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.
- 9 For what thanksgiving can we render again to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sakes before our God;
- 10 night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face, and may perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

- 11 Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you;
- 12 and the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we also do toward you,
- 13 to the end he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Chapter 4

- 1 Finally then, brothers, we beg and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, that you abound more and more.
- 2 For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.
- 3 For this is the will of God: your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality,
- 4 that each one of you know how to control his own body in honor
- 5 not in the passion of lust, even as the Gentiles who don't know God;
- 6 that no one should take advantage of and wrong a brother or sister in this matter; because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as also we forewarned you and testified.
- 7 For God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification.
- 8 Therefore he who rejects this doesn't reject man, but God, who has also given his Holy Spirit to you.
- 9 But concerning brotherly love, you have no need that one write to you. For you yourselves are taught by God to love one another,
- 10 for indeed you do it toward all the brothers who are in all Macedonia. But we exhort you, brothers, that you abound more and more;
- 11 and that you make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, even as we instructed you;
- 12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and may have need of nothing.
- 13 But we don't want you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning those who have fallen asleep, so that you don't grieve like the rest, who have no hope.
- 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.
- 15 For this we tell you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will in no way precede those who have fallen asleep.

- 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with God's trumpet. The dead will rise first
- 17 then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. So we will be with the Lord forever.
- 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Chapter 5

- 1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need that anything be written to you.
- 2 For you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night.
- 3 For when they are saying, "Peace and safety," then sudden destruction will come on them, like birth pains on a pregnant woman; and they will in no way escape.
- 4 But you, brothers, aren't in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief.
- 5 You are all children of light, and children of the day. We don't belong to the night, nor to darkness,
- 6 so then let's not sleep, as the rest do, but let's watch and be sober.
- 7 For those who sleep, sleep in the night; and those who are drunk are drunk in the night.
- 8 But let us, since we belong to the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and, for a helmet, the hope of salvation.
- 9 For God didn't appoint us to wrath, but to the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 10 who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.
- 11 Therefore exhort one another, and build each other up, even as you also do.
- 12 But we beg you, brothers, to know those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you,
- 13 and to respect and honor them in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.
- 14 We exhort you, brothers, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be patient toward all.
- 15 See that no one returns evil for evil to anyone, but always follow after that which is good, for one another, and for all.
- 16 Rejoice always.
- 17 Pray without ceasing.

18 In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus toward you.

19 Don't quench the Spirit.

20 Don't despise prophecies.

21 Test all things, and hold firmly that which is good.

22 Abstain from every form of evil.

23 May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

24 He who calls you is faithful, who will also do it.

25 Brothers, pray for us.

26 Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.

27 I solemnly command you by the Lord that this letter be read to all the holy brothers.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

2 THESSALONIANS

Letter-level caution: Pauline authorship and Marcionite standing are under question. The reconstruction is deliberately fragmentary: the reconstruction retains only a fragmentary reading after verse-level adjudication. See Companion A, “A Note on the Letter Count”.

In this reconstruction, 2 Thessalonians is the most heavily reconstructed letter in this collection. Many verses are either removed or carried with a SUS flag, and only a small core remains unqualified as ATT. The ‘restrainer’ passage of chapter 2 — the most theologically elaborate eschatological sequence in the Pauline corpus — is largely absent: the man of lawlessness, the one who restrains, the lying wonders. What remains is fragmentary: fragments of chapter 1, a reduced chapter 2, and two verses of chapter 3. Whether 2 Thessalonians is an authentic Pauline letter at all remains disputed in scholarship; the SUS flags throughout reflect that uncertainty. This text should be read as a tentative reconstruction, not a settled one.

The community appears to have received a teaching, perhaps attributed to Paul, that the day of the Lord has already arrived. The letter’s purpose is to correct this: that day has not come; certain things must happen first. What remains of that correction after reconstruction is fragmentary — the restrainer argument is largely absent, so the corrective barely holds together as a sequence. Whether this is an authentic Pauline letter addressing a real crisis, or a later disciple writing in Paul’s name to slow apocalyptic enthusiasm, is a question the reconstruction cannot resolve. Read it as what it may be: a brief, uncertain word to a community under eschatological pressure.

Chapter 1

- 1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the assembly of the Thessalonians in God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ:
- 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- SUS 3 We are bound to always give thanks to God for you, brothers, even as it is appropriate, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of each and every one of you towards one another abounds;
- SUS 4 so that we ourselves boast about you in the assemblies of God for your perseverance and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which you endure.
- SUS 5 This is an obvious sign of the righteous judgment of God, to the end that you may be counted worthy of God's Kingdom, for which you also suffer.
- 6 Since it is a righteous thing with God to repay affliction to those who afflict you,
- 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted with us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire,
- SUS 8 punishing those who don't know God and those who don't obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus,
- SUS 9 who will pay the penalty: eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might,
- SUS 10 when he comes in that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired among all those who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.
- SUS 11 To this end we also pray always for you, that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire of goodness and work of faith, with power;
- SUS 12 that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 2

- 1 Now, brothers, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to him, we ask you
- 3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For it will not be, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of destruction,
- 4 he who opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he sits as God in the temple of God, setting himself up as God.
- 9 even he whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

Chapter 3

- 10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: "If anyone will not work, don't let him eat."
- 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

PHILEMON

Philemon is the one letter in this corpus that required no reconstruction. Every verse is retained; nothing is removed or flagged. It is the shortest and most personal of Paul's letters — a private appeal to a householder on behalf of a runaway slave — and it is the control case for the entire methodology. If the signal framework were merely flagging content this analysis finds theologically unwelcome, it would fire here. It does not. Philemon passed every test with zero flags. Read it as Paul at his most direct: no theology, no argumentation, one person asking another for a favour on the basis of love.

Paul is asking Philemon to receive back Onesimus — a slave who has apparently become a Christian through Paul's ministry while separated from his household — not merely as a slave but as a brother in Christ. The entire letter is a masterclass in relational persuasion: Paul never commands, always appeals; he works through the logic of love and mutual obligation; he offers to pay any debt Onesimus owes and signs it in his own hand. The theological weight is minimal and deliberate — Paul's gospel of reconciliation is enacted rather than argued. What the reader encounters here is the claim of chapters 3 of Galatians ('neither slave nor free') applied to one actual relationship, in one household, with no distance between the claim and the consequence.

Chapter 1

- 1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon, our beloved fellow worker,
- 2 to the beloved Apphia, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the assembly in your house:
- 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 4 I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers,

- 5 hearing of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints,
- 6 that the fellowship of your faith may become effective in the knowledge of every good thing which is in us in Christ Jesus.
- 7 For we have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.
- 8 Therefore though I have all boldness in Christ to command you that which is appropriate,
- 9 yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you, being such a one as Paul, the aged, but also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.
- 10 I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have become the father of in my chains,
- 11 who once was useless to you, but now is useful to you and to me.
- 12 I am sending him back. Therefore receive him, that is, my own heart,
- 13 whom I desired to keep with me, that on your behalf he might serve me in my chains for the Good News.
- 14 But I was willing to do nothing without your consent, that your goodness would not be as of necessity, but of free will.
- 15 For perhaps he was therefore separated from you for a while that you would have him forever,
- 16 no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much rather to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.
- 17 If then you count me a partner, receive him as you would receive me.
- 18 But if he has wronged you at all or owes you anything, put that to my account.
- 19 I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self besides).
- 20 Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in the Lord.
- 21 Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even beyond what I say.
- 22 Also, prepare a guest room for me, for I hope that through your prayers I will be restored to you.
- 23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,
- 24 as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.
- 25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

THE TEACHING OF PAUL

This section does not interpret Paul. It reads him. What follows is drawn entirely from the reconstructed texts in the preceding pages — the letters as they stand after the passages this analysis identifies as secondary have been set aside. No additional sources are introduced. No external theological framework is applied. The question asked is simple: when these letters are read together in their reconstructed form, what system of teaching, if any, do they describe? The answer follows. The point is not to claim that this is what Paul believed. The point is to make visible what emerges from the corpus when the additions are removed. A system emerges. It is coherent. It is not the system of the letters in their received form.

What emerges is a grace that operates outside the logic of merit, covenant, and conditional relationship — a grace that dissolves the social categories the Creator’s world relies on, that requires no institutional mediation, that places its ethics above anything law can command, and that makes its guarantee unconditional. Whether that teaching originated with Paul himself, or with a tradition he received, or was reconstructed around a set of genuine letters by someone who understood what they implied, the reconstruction lets the reader see it without the overlays that obscured it.

I. A God not already known

Paul’s opening claim, stated most clearly in Galatians, is that the God he encountered is not the God presupposed by his audience. He was “set apart before his birth, and called through grace” — not through covenant, not through Torah observance, not through the transmission of any human institution (Gal 1:15). His gospel came “not from men, nor through a man, but through a revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal 1:1, 1:12). He did not go up to Jerusalem after that revelation. He did not consult those who were apostles

before him (Gal 1:16–17). The independence he defends is not personal pride; it is structural. He is describing an encounter with something that arrived from outside the existing religious system — and that is itself part of the content.

The god of this age has blinded the minds of those who don't believe, that the light of the Good News of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn on them.
— 2 Corinthians 4:4

This verse, retained in the reconstruction, places a distinct agent — “the god of this age” — in opposition to the one Paul is describing. It is not an incidental phrase. The god of this age is the governing logic of the present order: transaction, merit, conditional relationship, the logic of law. The god Paul is announcing is different in kind.

II. Grace as a different governing logic

The word “grace” in Paul does not mean generosity within a transactional system. It names a different logic altogether — one that does not compute in terms of debt and repayment, merit and reward, failure and punishment. The sharpest statement in Galatians makes the logic explicit:

I do not reject the grace of God. For if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nothing.
— Galatians 2:21

If the law can produce righteousness, grace is unnecessary; if grace is real, the law cannot have been the mechanism. The two operate on different principles that cannot be combined. This is a logical claim, not a pastoral one: transactional logic and grace are mutually exclusive. You cannot have a partially transactional grace. Once the logic of merit enters, the logic of grace has been exited.

III. Faith as reception, not performance

The alternative to law-observance in Paul's proclamation is not moral effort of a different kind. It is “hearing with faith” — the reception of something that arrives from outside the self (Gal 3:2, 3:5). Paul's own account of how he received his gospel uses the word “apocalypse” — an unveiling, a disclosure

(Gal 1:12). Something hidden has been made visible. The appropriate response is not achievement but reception.

This is the force of the justification-by-faith argument across both Romans and Galatians: “a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ” (Gal 2:16). The contrast is not between inferior religious effort and superior religious effort. It is between working for something and receiving something. Grace does not reward. It discloses.

IV. New creation, not covenant renewal

The most structurally important claim in the reconstructed corpus is about ontology. Paul is not describing the fulfilment of Israel’s covenant story. He is describing a break:

If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here.
— 2 Corinthians 5:17

Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what matters is a new creation.
— Galatians 6:15

These are not covenant-renewal statements. They are not “the story has reached its intended conclusion.” They are category breaks. The reconstructed Galatians makes this explicit: after the removal of the Abraham-faith-Gentile chain and the “law as guardian until Christ” passage, the letter no longer grounds Gentile inclusion in the Abrahamic covenant. Gentiles are included not because they have been grafted into Israel’s story, but because the framework that requires that story has been superseded. The new creation does not upgrade the old categories; it exits them.

V. The dissolution of categories

The social consequence of new creation is stated directly:

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
— Galatians 3:28

The Creator’s social categories — ethnic identity, social rank, biological sex — have no organizing function in the grace community. They continue to exist in the world; Paul is not denying their material reality. But they have lost their

claim to rank, to separate, to establish hierarchy. “God has placed the members in the body, each one of them, as it pleased him” (1 Cor 12:18). No member is superior to another. The body has no hierarchy; it has interdependence.

The most concrete application of this in the corpus is Philemon — the one letter that required no reconstruction at all. Paul does not command Philemon. He appeals to him. He asks him to receive back Onesimus “no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother — especially to me, but how much rather to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord” (Phlm 16). The claim of Galatians 3:28 applied to one actual relationship, in one household, with no distance between the claim and the consequence.

VI. Ethics that exceed law

Grace does not exit the world. It operates within it from a different register — one whose demands law cannot specify because they require something law cannot produce.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against these things there is no law.
— Galatians 5:22–23

“Against these things there is no law.” The ethics of grace do not fall below legal requirements. They exceed them in a direction law cannot follow. Law can command compliance; it cannot command love. It can compel restitution; it cannot compel what Paul asks of Philemon: “receive him as you would receive me” (Phlm 17). That demand exceeds anything a court could enforce. It is the logic of gift rather than obligation — but gift that obligates more, not less.

The love-standard of 1 Corinthians 13 — retained in full in the reconstruction — is the measure against which every claim of spiritual superiority is tested: “If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal” (1 Cor 13:1). Every charismatic gift, every doctrinal position, every institutional claim ranks below the ethics of grace. Not because ethics replaces doctrine, but because the ethics are the visible form of what the doctrine claims.

VII. Weakness as the signature of grace

The wisdom of the present age cannot recognise grace, because grace operates through what the present age classifies as failure:

God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are.
— 1 Corinthians 1:27–28

Paul's own account of the thorn in the flesh (2 Cor 12:7–10, retained in the reconstruction) ends with the divine response: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." His conclusion: "When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:10). This is not a consolation for failure. It is a claim about where grace operates: not through the demonstrations of strength the present age uses to establish credibility, but through their inverse.

The cross is the governing symbol of this inversion. "The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor 1:18). An execution instrument. The symbol of defeat by the present age's standards. Paul places it at the centre of his proclamation precisely because it is unassimilable to the logic of power, merit, and institutional authority.

VIII. No mediating structure

Grace requires no institutional access point. This is stated structurally in Galatians 1:

I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.
— Galatians 1:11–12

He consulted no one after his revelation. He did not go up to Jerusalem. When he eventually met Cephas, he confronted him publicly over a failure to act consistently with the gospel (Gal 2:11–14). The point is not that apostolic community is unimportant — 1 Corinthians and Romans both describe it — but that it derives its authority from the grace encounter, not from institutional

succession. The encounter is direct. The community that forms around it is a community of equals who have undergone the same reception.

This is stated most plainly in Ephesians 4:4–6 (retained): “There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to one hope when you were called — one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” No human mediator appears in that chain. The Spirit is distributed to each member of the body, not transmitted through a hierarchy.

IX. Suffering as participation

The reconstructed letters do not promise deliverance from suffering. They describe participation in it:

I want to know Christ — yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

— *Philippians 3:10–11*

This is not a theology of substitutionary transaction. Christ does not suffer instead of Paul; Paul suffers with Christ. The goal is conformity to the pattern of the cross and resurrection, not escape from it. Romans 8 — the most sustained account of this in the reconstructed corpus — moves through “the sufferings of this present time” (8:18) to the declaration that nothing in creation can separate the believer from the love of God (8:38–39). The suffering is not removed. The separation is what is removed.

“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him” (Rom 8:28). Not that suffering is prevented. Not that circumstances are managed. That they are worked through — that the logic of the cross, weakness producing strength, loss producing gift, applies across the range of actual experience.

X. The unconditional guarantee

Grace’s guarantee is not conditioned on continued faithfulness, on institutional membership, or on doctrinal conformity:

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,

neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

— Romans 8:38–39

This is the climax of the reconstruction's longest and most systematic letter. It follows "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1) and "you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption" (Rom 8:15). The argument builds from justification by faith through freedom from sin's dominion through life in the Spirit to the declaration that the relationship established by grace cannot be severed — not by death, not by powers, not by height or depth, not by anything in creation.

The peace Paul describes in Philippians carries the same logical structure: "The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:7). It surpasses understanding — which is to say, it surpasses the framework within which merit, compliance, and condemnation are computed. It exists in a different register entirely.

The shape of grace

These propositions are not isolated insights. Across the reconstructed corpus they form a single, coherent shape:

A God not already known, revealed in a different register than the Creator's logic of merit and law. Grace as the name for that reality — not generosity within a transactional framework, and not a new framework to administer. Faith as the reception of what grace discloses, not the performance of what law requires. New creation as the ontological consequence — not covenant fulfilment, but a category break. The dissolution of categories as new creation's social expression: no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female in the grace community. Ethics that exceed law in the direction of gift: operating above what law can specify, in ways law cannot produce. Weakness and the cross as the signature of where grace operates — through the inverse of what the present age recognises as credibility. No institutional mediation: the encounter is direct; the community that forms around it is a community of equals. Suffering endured in participation rather than escaped, because the separation that matters is not between the self and pain but between the self and the love of God — and that separation is the one thing the reconstruction's Paul declares impossible. The guarantee unconditional.

This is what the letters teach, read together, after the reconstruction. The editorial programme that altered them pulled consistently away from this and toward something else — toward covenant continuity, toward institutional hierarchy, toward household codes, toward a conditional relationship that could be managed by those who administered the conditions. The reconstruc-

tion makes that direction visible. What was being altered was not a set of stray verses. Grace was being made manageable. The alteration was systematic.

Companion C — The Apostolikon Antitheses — uses this text as its base. Each passage in the Apostolikon that stands in direct tension with the Old Testament is set alongside the source it contradicts, with a brief analysis of the contrast and what it reveals about the interpolations that were removed.

What you have in these pages is what remains when that effort is set aside.

In plain terms

The God Paul describes does not keep score. You did not earn your way in, and you cannot lose your way out. Nothing can separate you from it.

Grace, in the sense used here, is what arrives before the ledger starts: unearned, unmediated, unconditional, and impossible to administer. It is standing and belonging given before any account is opened.

If that has actually landed, it changes the ordinary moments first.

You do something generous and no one notices; grace is not needing it to return as praise. You are owed an apology and it never arrives; grace refuses to let the missing apology govern your worth. You correct without humiliation, hold advantage without weaponising it, and let people answer freely.

You have damaged a relationship. You said something cruel, betrayed trust, or failed someone who depended on you. Grace does not erase responsibility; it changes what responsibility is for. So you say: I did this. I can see what it damaged. You do not have to make me feel better. What would help repair what can be repaired? Then you listen. If they need space, repair gives space; if trust has to be rebuilt, repair does not demand it as the price of apology.

That is where forgiveness belongs. Forgiveness is not for the person who caused the harm; it is for the one who was harmed. It is not owed to the perpetrator, and an apology does not purchase it. Grace does not wait for an apology to restore worth. If you caused harm, your apology is truth offered toward repair. Forgiveness may follow only as the harmed person's release of a debt that no longer has the power to define them.

Paul's own example is Philemon. He does not command, threaten, or deny the debt. He offers to carry it himself, names Onesimus as his own heart, and leaves Philemon free to respond. That is grace moving in a real household, where law would not have reached far enough.

That is also why the later changes matter. A community built on this kind of grace is difficult to control. If the slave is received as a brother, the master cannot rely on status alone. If the harmed person is not forced to forgive, apology cannot be used as a receipt. If worth is given before performance, leaders cannot make belonging depend on rule-keeping, rank, or debt.

The editorial pressure moves those relationships back into administrable forms: household codes, submission to rulers, covenant tests, judgment ledgers, and ranked social order. It does not simply add doctrine. It turns free response back into managed obligation.

The accuser

In the oldest layer of the tradition, the adversary is not a rebel angel opposed to God from outside. In Job and Zechariah, the satan is a prosecuting figure in the divine court — a functionary whose role is to test and accuse. His move is always the same: let me examine whether the claim is justified. Let me open the ledger and see if the worth is real.

In the temptation narratives, the adversary's three approaches to Jesus are all transactional: prove your standing, demonstrate your authority, earn what you claim to have. Each one is an invitation to open a ledger that grace had declared closed. The refusal in each case is not argument. It is declaration: the condition does not apply.

Every person who has encountered grace knows a version of this voice. It is not a being you meet externally. It is the voice that says: you have not yet done enough, the condition has not been met, the debt has not been cleared. It runs underneath anxiety, shame, the endless need to qualify. It is the accuser's oldest move — not cruelty for its own sake, but the sincere insistence that the condition is necessary.

The editing of Paul's letters becomes the accuser's institutional form. Not because the editors were malicious — most of them believed, completely and sincerely, that the conditions they were reinserting were real and necessary. That is precisely what makes it the accuser's work. The mechanism does not require malice. It requires only that the people doing it believe the ledger cannot close.

Paul's answer to the accuser is Romans 8:38–39. Not an argument. A declaration. Nothing in creation can separate the believer from the love of God.

Neither death nor life. Neither the present nor the future. Neither height nor depth. Nor anything else in all creation.

The accuser has no counter to that. It has nothing left to work with. The debt is cancelled. The ledger is closed. Not because the condition was finally met — but because the condition was never the point.